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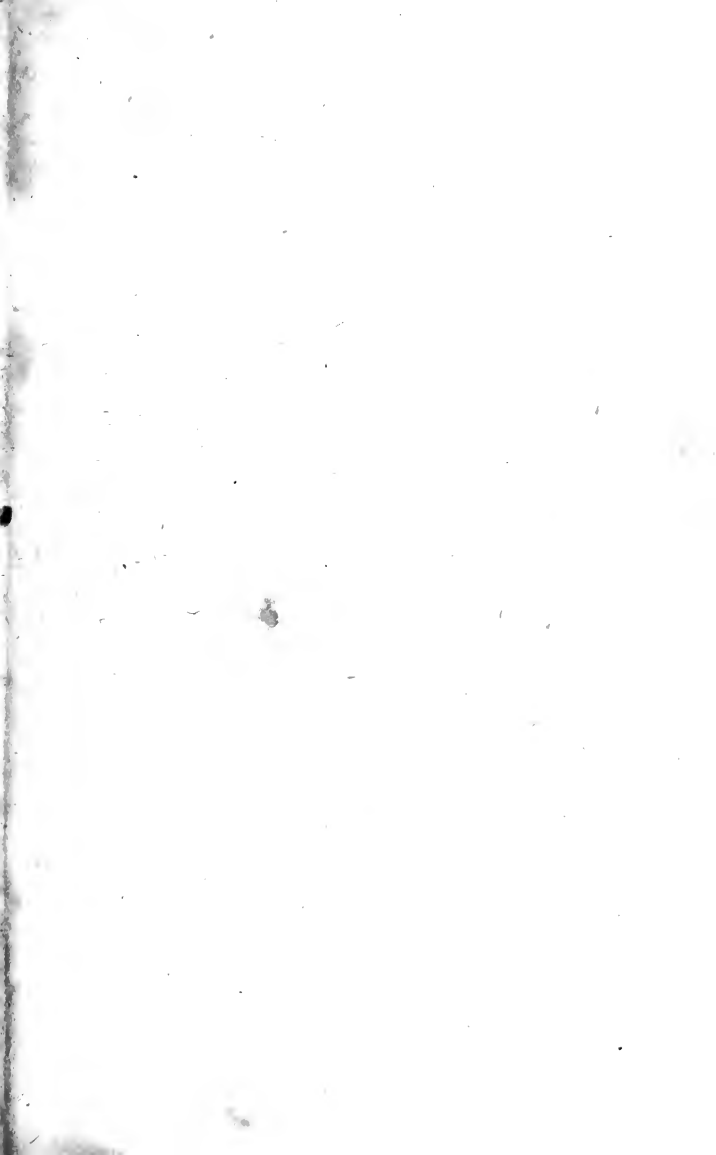
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FEUDAL TYRANTS.

VOL. IV.

THE JOURNAL

OF THE

AMERICAN

FEUDAL TYRANTS;

OR,

The Counts of Carlsheim and Sargans.

A ROMANCE.

TAKEN FROM THE GERMAN.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY M. G. LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF

The Bravo of Venice, Adelgitha, Rugantino, &c.

VOL. IV.

SECOND EDITION.

The portals sound, and pacing forth
With stately steps and slow,
High potentates, and dames of regal birth,
And mitred fathers in long order go. GRAY.

London :

Printed by D. N. SHURY, Berwick Street, Soho,

FOR J. F. HUGHES, WIGMORE STREET, CAVENDISH
SQUARE.

1807.

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FEUDAL TYRANTS,

&c. &c. &c.

PART THE SEVENTH.

CONTINUATION OF

“THE SISTERS WITHOUT A NAME.”

Written by the Abbot of Cloister-Curwald.

OH! noble Elizabeth! you to whom these leaves are more particularly addrest, have you had resolution sufficient to read thus far? will you possess sufficient presence of mind to enable you to continue the pe-

rusal of this writing, now that I have placed before you the most important and most cruel transactions, which have occurred throughout your whole life, and by which your whole life has been embittered? and will you, when at length you reach the conclusion of my painful narrative, magnanimously sacrifice your long-cherished prejudices ; and daring to gaze steadily on the light of truth, will you learn to excuse and to pity, to regret and to forgive ?

Before I relate the transactions, which followed the fatal interview between Ida and her lover on your bridal day, I must request your patient attention, while I relate those incidents of Henry of Montfort's earlier days, which I believe to be still unknown to you. It is thus only, that I can enable

you to form a correct and unbiassed judgment of the case.

Henry's father stood already on the brink of the grave, when his son was born : he died, while Henry was still an infant. His wife soon followed him. The care of the little orphan now devolved upon an uncle, who would have been much better pleased, if the deceased Count of Montfort had died without progeny, and had left him the undivided inheritance of his fertile and extensive domains.

By his brother's will this uncle was appointed guardian to the young orphan, and destined to be his representative, till Henry should attain the age of twenty-one. This limitation of his power was by no means to Count Egbert's taste. He would willingly have disputed the

legitimacy of Henry's birth ; but the acknowledged virtue of the late Countess made it impossible to fix any suspicions upon her character. However, by dint of solicitations, of powerful protection at Vienna, and (above all) of considerable sums of money distributed among the Emperor's favourites, he contrived to get his nephew's claims set aside till after his own decease ; though the decree, which thus established Count Egbert's succession to the inheritance, positively excluded any children which he might have, and regulated, that they should only succeed to the estates of Montfort, in case of Henry's dying without heirs.

Though Count Egbert was already advanced in years, and was still a bachelor, nevertheless he was highly offended

at

at the restriction thus established against his lineal descendants, in case it should ever please Heaven to bestow upon him such blessings. The sight of the child became hateful to him; and in hopes of at once relieving himself from its presence, and of removing an obstacle to his contracting a suitable marriage, he gave his little nephew in charge to one of his servants, whom he believed capable of executing any villainy; at the same time telling him—"To do with the brat whatever he thought would be most conducive to his master's interests."—Some little remains of conscience prevented his declaring his wishes in more express terms; but what he said, was quite sufficient to make his meaning very far from ambiguous.

Count Egbert's servant was a native

of Switzerland. He gave his lord to understand, that he perfectly comprehended him, and made no difficulty of taking a solemn oath, that he would punctually obey his injunctions as expressed above. After an absence of some weeks he returned without the child; his reward was ample; and he immediately employed it in securing a kind protection for the orphan Henry, whom he had neither murdered, nor abandoned to chance and the wide world, but had concealed him in a shepherd's-cottage near the Lake of the Four Cantons, in order the more effectually to secure him against the malice of his unnatural uncle. The shepherd died, and bequeathed the child to the care of his master, the venerable Melthal. Count Egbert's servant (who occasionally

ally visited those parts in order to inquire after the safety of him, whom he had rescued from destruction) was greatly rejoiced to find him under the protection of old Melthal, who was universally esteemed to be one of the wisest and best of mortals. He scrupled not to confide to him the secret of Henry's birth, and they arranged together the means of establishing him in his rights at a future period. The servant paid the debt of nature soon after this discovery, and the mystery of Henry's rank and claims remained in the sole possession of Melthal.

He spared no expence in rendering the boy's education equal to his future hopes; and aware, that in all probability resolution and valour would be the only means of reinstating him fully in the

possession of his rights, at an early period of life he sent the orphan away from his retired and peaceful vallies, and took measures for his being brought up to a life of arms.

Melthal frequently forsook his cottage to visit the young Henry, who now began to give tokens of a real inclination for his profession, and was more distinguished in the Emperor's army, than any other youth of the same age : but he never invited Henry to return his visit among the mountains of Switzerland. Now, however, that the old man was sinking under the weight of years, and began to feel that distant journeys were more than his debilitated frame could bear, he determined to send for the son of his adoption, that he might declare to him his real origin, and bestow
a blessing

a blessing on him, before they should part for ever. The young man obeyed the call: his arrival was honoured by a rural festival; and the young people of those happy vallies rejoiced in the acquisition of such a youth, who (as they supposed) was returned home in order to pass the remainder of his life among them, as their friend and fellow citizen..

You are already acquainted with the mutual attachment, to which this festival gave rise by the meeting of Ida and Henry under the assumed names of Rosanna Tell and Erwin Melthal. This attachment soon became public, and among others came to the knowledge of old Melthal. An union with the daughter of an Helvetian peasant (even though that peasant was William Tell, and though the maiden herself was the per-

fection of loveliness and virtue) threatened the destruction of all those exalted plans, which the old man had been so long meditating in favour of his adopted son ; and he thought, nothing more would be necessary to make Henry break off this unsuitable connection, than to discover his noble origin to the youth, and to exhibit before him his great expectations in their full splendour. He soon found, that real love makes the heart consider all obstacles as trifles, and believe every thing is possible except abandoning the object, to whom its adoration is vowed.

Henry of Montfort continued to love that Rosanna, to whom Erwin Melthal had sworn eternal fidelity: Ida, Countess of Werdenberg, (to whom her real birth was discovered about the same period)

period) preserved her attachment to the humble peasant, to whom Rosa na Tell had pledged her hand and her affections. Each had been sworn to secrecy; both concealed the painful mystery in their respective bosoms; but neither suffered a day to pass without repeating the assurance of fidelity beyond the grave, though both were secretly conscious, how mighty were the obstacles which opposed their keeping that assurance.

They were separated. The Emperor's commands summoned Henry to the army; and the old Melthal thought, that in the present position of things a slight falsehood would be justified by the intention, with which it was fabricated.—Accordingly, a report was soon circulated, that his grandson Erwin had

fallen at the siege of Bender. It obtained universal credit ; and Ida, (for whose sole use the artifice had been designed) doubted not, that her lover had perished on the field of glory. *One* person however (and that to his great mortification) was assured of the inaccuracy of the report. No sooner had Henry left Helvetia, than Melthal set out for the Castle of Montfort ; he made known to the astonished Count, that his nephew was still in existence, and spared neither persuasions nor threats to induce the old usurper to reinstate the true heir in his rights and titles.

Threats and persuasions from the mouth of a man of sense and probity came with a force, that few villains however hardened are able to resist entirely.

entirely. Count Egbert trembled in the presence of his venerable monitor ; and he presumed not to give him such a reply, as he would willingly have done, had he followed his heart's instigations. He answered him with fair promises and professions, the trusting to which cost the poor old man many a painful journey ; till at length highly exasperated at having been made so long the dupe of his soft words and endless delays, he assumed a tone of such authority, as almost frightened the trembling usurper out of his senses, and made him solemnly swear to lose no time in acknowledging the claims of his nephew. Unluckily, this scene agitated Melthal so violently, that the consequence was an illness, which soon carried him to his grave. Count Egbert did not let slip so good an oppor-

opportunity of annihilating the hopes of Henry ; he easily persuaded the unconscious heirs of old Melthal to give up to him the papers, which attested his nephew's birth, and which, (as they seemed to relate entirely to the Montfort family), they made no doubt, were (as he asserted) his own peculiar property and no concern of any other person's.

Now then who was so happy as the crafty Egbert ? in the full exultation of triumph he was persuaded, that the papers which he lost no time in committing to the flames, were the only proofs of his nephew's existence. But in this respect he was deceived. When Henry departed for the army, Melthal charged him to seize the first favourable opportunity of laying his case before
the

the emperor ; for which purpose he furnished him with the authentic documents of his real birth, and those which fell into Count Egbert's hands were nothing more valuable than mere copies. The favourable opportunity, of which Melthal had spoken, was not tardy in arriving. At the siege of Bender Henry behaved with such distinguished gallantry as to make it the general opinion, that if all his companions had performed their duty as well, the victory would have been wrested from the hands of the infidels.

The emperor was not the last to applaud his gallant demeanour. He commanded him to name a reward ; and Henry demanded to be re-instated in those rights, to which he could establish
his

his claim by proofs, that would set all doubt at defiance.

—“ I do not wish,” said he, “ that my uncle’s conduct towards me should undergo too nice an examination ; nor during his lifetime do I insist, that my inheritance should be restored to me. I only demand for the present to be acknowledged as a descendant of the house of Montfort, and for the future to be protected in obtaining those advantages, to which I may be able to substantiate a lawful claim.—I am not desirous of expelling the old Count from the station, which he has so long occupied ; I only demand, that when his death shall leave that station vacant, I may succeed to that, which in justice is my birth right.”—

The

The Emperor Albert, who was already aware that under the administrations of the debauched Venceslaus, and the careless Sigismund (his immediate predecessors) much partiality had taken place in settling the affairs of the Montfort family, and who besides wished most anxiously to serve his favourite in every point that was not repugnant to justice, heard the above declaration with pleasure, and praised the youthful warrior's generosity. Albert himself was generous, and it delighted him, when others acted, as *he* would have acted himself.

On the next day Henry was declared by the emperor to be a Count of Montfort, and was allotted a command suitable to his high rank and distinguished services. This change of name contributed

contributed to support the erroneous belief, that Erwin Melthal had never been heard of since the battle of Bender, and that in all probability he had fallen in the field. Ida therefore was sorrowing for his loss at the very moment, that he was hastening back to the beloved valley, crowned with laurels, and determined to share with her his honours and his happiness.

Alas ! that beloved valley was no longer to be recognised ! dreadful storms had laid it waste ; the mountain-torrents had deluged the country ; and when he at length with difficulty had reached Tell's habitation, he found it silent and empty—the dreadful pestilence, which had more than decimated the unfortunate inhabitants of those quarters, had raged with peculiar fury
in

in the house of Tell; but he was informed, that a remnant of the family had taken refuge (so at least it was rumoured) in the Convent of Engelberg. Thither Henry repaired without loss of time, but he found no one capable of giving him either present comfort or future hope. His apprehensions were converted into despair, when in reply to his enquiries Tell's humble grave was pointed out to him, and when he beheld near it two smaller graves, which (he was assured) contained the bodies of two of the old man's granddaughters. It is probable, that this assurance was given not without foundation, for several of the grand-children of Tell had followed him to Engelberg, and had there fallen a prey to the inveteracy of the prevalent disease.

The

The wretched Henry was thoroughly convinced, that the bones of Ida and Constantia rested within those smaller graves. He knelt beside them; he watered them with his tears, and abandoned himself to the most violent emotions of anguish, which love and despair ever excited in the heart of man. It was long, before he attained any degree of composure; and he employed the first hour, in which his heart was sensible of a melancholy resignation, in hastening to the Convent, and requesting to know every particular respecting the death of the lovely sisters. He wished also to enquire, why they had interred in the open church-yard the bodies of those angels, whose virtues should have obtained for their tomb the most distinguished

tinguished spot to be found within the Convent's sanctuary.

The high-sounding title of "Count Henry of Montfort" obtained for him an easy admission into the Convent-parlour; but he derived no benefit from his visit to Engelberg. The old Abbess, who had superintended the Convent during Constantia's residence, had paid the debt of nature. The present superior was totally ignorant of the history of the sisters; and she could not help secretly suspecting, that the young-warrior's understanding was not quite as sound as it should have been, when with considerable impetuosity he demanded as a matter of right, that the grand-daughters of a common peasant, who had conferred on the institution neither wealth nor honour, should be allotted

alloted a tomb in the Chapel of St. Engeltruda!

Henry was at length made to understand, that Ida's remains appeared to be sacred relics in no eyes but those of her lover: the only comfort, which he now felt himself capable of enjoying, was to honour *her* in death, whom in life he had adored so truly: accordingly the greatest part of the wealth, which he had earned in the Turkish wars, was expended in raising a stately monument to Ida's memory in the Chapel of Engelberg. He burned with impatience to see (united with those of the fair sisters) his own name engraved on the monument's white marble, as being that of the person by whose directions it was raised; and he declared, that his heart could never taste repose, till
the

the work should be completed, and till the bones of Mary and Rosanna Tell (for such he still thought them) were removed to the honourable burial-place provided for them by his affection. While the tomb was erecting, nothing could persuade him to quit the holy place even for a day; and the whole neighbourhood was lost in astonishment at the homage, which the Count of Montfort thought it necessary to pay to the relics of Tell's daughters.

Nothing was able to rouse him from that dangerous melancholy, to which he abandoned himself without reserve, till the emperor's commands necessitated his attendance. He arrived at Grans, and found, that while he had been giving up everything for the indulgence
of

of unavailing sorrow, his exalted protector had not been equally unmindful of his favourite's worldly interests. The old Count of Montfort had been summoned to the imperial court; where he was made so fully aware of the favourable posture of Henry's affairs, and was so thoroughly convinced, that to deny the authenticity of his claims would be fruitless, that his nephew no sooner made his appearance, than he came towards him with open arms, and embraced him as his relation and his presumptive heir. He was then preparing to offer some excuse for past transactions, which in their very nature were totally inexcusable; but the young Count interrupted his apologies, freely forgave him, and in presence of the emperor assured his
uncle,

uncle, that he might depend upon his burying his wrongs in silence and oblivion.

Still, when the arrangements respecting Henry's succession to the Lordship of Montfort came under consideration, Count Egbert earnestly insisted, that two or three clauses should be introduced, in order that the future heirs of his body might not be left entirely destitute. Henry could not conceal a smile, while he acceded to this proposal, and the rest of the company indulged themselves without scruple in a loud burst of laughter; for the old man was still unprovided with either wife or children, though there was scarcely to be found in all Germany a lady of beauty, birth, and fortune, whom he had not honoured with the offer of his hand and heart.

On the other hand, Henry, whose age would have suited much better with such proposals, seemed not to bestow a thought upon the subject: amidst the throng of lovely women who graced the court, his heart remained cold as the marble, which covered the imagined ashes of his loved and lamented Rosanna. But the emperor was not equally indifferent, respecting his young friend's contracting some honourable engagement.

—"Montfort," said he, "I flatter myself, that I have omitted no means of substantiating your claims, which lay in my imperial power: but fraud and avarice will frequently suggest such ingenious expedients for eluding the execution of justice, that (should I die before your uncle) you might still find
it

it no easy task to obtain possession of your inheritance. While therefore I am still in existence and able to serve you, unite yourself by marriage with some powerful family, whose connection may support your claims, when death shall have deprived you of my favour and protection.—Your enemies then will not dare to dispute your rights. Tell me, Henry; is the indifference, with which you seem to look on the beauties of my court, real or affected? —If your heart has not as yet made its choice, suffer me to mention to you the bride of *my* selection.”—

Henry’s reply assured him with great truth, that there existed not a woman, who possest any interest in his affections.

—“ Well then !” resumed the em-

peror, “ take my advice, and offer your hand to the beautiful Elizabeth of March, the jewel of all our German maidens: in her you will find united youth, charms, spirit, sense, piety, and virtue; besides a thousand other excellent qualities, which are seldom to be met with but in men. Her family too is sufficiently powerful to secure you against the attacks of malignity and violence, to which you will probably be exposed after my death; an event, which increasing infirmities make me believe to be at no great distance.”—

Henry had frequently seen and admired the noble Elizabeth. In truth, it was considered among the young courtiers almost as a total want of taste, and as a proof of a cold insensible heart, to see Elizabeth and feel nothing warmer
than

than admiration. Henry (who could make no reasonable objection to the match proposed, and who was unwilling to confess the fruitless passion, which devoured his heart, for one who had long since rested in the grave) could only assert the improbability of his obtaining Elizabeth's hand in preference to many suitors so much more distinguished than himself; especially as it was reported, that her hand was already destined to the youthful Richard of Ulmenhorst, her father's ward and near relation.

—"Tell not me," interrupted the emperor, "of those reports, and of your own consciousness of your demerits. Go to the Castle of March; become acquainted with Elizabeth's virtues, as well as with her charms. I am

certain, that you will love her ; I flatter myself, that *she* too will love *you* ; and what pleasure would it give me, dear Henry, could I see your hands united, before I close my eyes in this world for ever !"—

An interest so warm, and expressions so condescending in the mouth of a sovereign, could not but produce the desired effect. Montfort obeyed, and visited the Castle of March. He beheld Elizabeth ; he investigated her character ; she inspired him with esteem, with admiration but not with love.—yet it was soon evident . . (will the Countess of Torrenburg ever pardon my assertion ?) that Elizabeth had not seen Henry with the same indifference. He felt, that he was preferred ; he could not but confess, that the possession of such an angel must be an inestimable treasure ;
and

and though the remembrance of Rosanna rendered his heart incapable of any warmer sentiment than friendship, still since that beloved-one was lost to him for ever, he resolved not to let his folly throw away the blessing, which offered itself to his acceptance. He determined to fulfill the emperor's injunctions, and to offer his hand to the only woman, who was worthy to fill Ida's place in his heart. But he hesitated so long, and took so much time before he made his declaration, that Elizabeth's parents had already promised her in the most solemn and positive manner to the rich and powerful Count of Torrenburg. In consequence, Montfort was given to understand (though with every possible mark of esteem) that his absence from the Castle of

March would be acceptable to its owner.

Grieved and vexed at his having so long delayed to explain himself, Henry departed; the heart of Elizabeth accompanied him. Count Egbert had never seemed very anxious for his nephew's marriage, nor had given himself any trouble, in order to forward his views upon Elizabeth: the fact was, that in spite of the ill success of his former matrimonial speculations, he was at that moment totally engrossed by a new scheme of the same nature; and the person, to whom his views were now directed, was no other than. . . . the Lady Ida of Werdenberg. He was not only enchanted by her personal charms, but he also took it into his consideration, that after the Count of Torrenburg's death

she

the would possess very plausible claims upon the valuable domains of Carlsheim and Sargans ; claims, which (as the possibility of his own death was an idea, which never by any accident was suffered to enter into his calculations) this silly old man proposed to inforce in their fullest extent.

He had already given the Count of Torrenburg some hints of the honour, which he had it in contemplation to confer upon his family. The Count in return gave him to understand, that if his niece had no objection to the match, he should not oppose it : and as the old dotard thought himself irresistible in spite of former disappointments (which might have taught him better) he was on the very point of surprizing Ida with the agreeable intelligence, that

she had made a conquest of his heart. It was at this juncture, that the news reached him of his destined uncle's being on the brink of marriage with the Lady Elizabeth of March.

Nothing could be more contrary to his plans, than this intelligence; Count Frederick of Torrenburg might have children, and then there would be an end of all his claims in right of his bride, whom he loved not merely as the beautiful Ida of Werdenberg, but as the future co-heiress of Carlsheim and Sargans. Now then he had nothing more at heart, than to break off this inconvenient marriage. To accomplish this, no better means suggested itself, than to persuade his nephew to a renewal of his addresses to the intended bride; and since her hand was no longer

longer to be obtained by the ordinary methods of solicitation, he resolved to have recourse to a little innocent artifice, which (he doubted not) would soon bring the young people to a proper understanding. Aware, that Henry was not likely to enforce his suit with as much eagerness as the nature of the case required, the uncle in his zeal for his nephew's advantage, or rather for the success of his own interested views, resolved to examine himself into the state of Elizabeth's inclinations, and to place Henry's attachment to her in the most favourable light. He found the unhappy girl in tears; the day was already fixed, on which her hand was to be united with that of the dreaded Count of Torrenburg. It was no difficult task to make

her confess her disinclination to her antient bridegroom, and her preference for the blooming Montfort, on whom her heart had long fixed its affections irrevocably. . She also listened without any *very* marked signs of repugnance to the proposal of an elopement. Her heart and her reason both assured her, that to avoid the union which she so much detested, flight was the only resource left her: her friend Ida had advised her adopting it without delay; and now the same proposal was made to her from a quarter the most unexpected. Elizabeth was at length persuaded by the pressing entreaties of Count Egbert to summon to her aid the youth, who (as she was assured by his uncle) burned for her with the most ardent affection, and to whom

her union with his rival would undoubtedly give a mortal wound.

She wrote to Henry, and declared herself ready to throw herself upon his protection. This important step was taken by Elizabeth through anxiety and affection, approved of by Ida out of friendship and ignorance of the world, and advised by the old hypocrite Count Egbert for the sake of his own private interest. As to Henry himself, he was perfectly ignorant of all that was going forward, till he received Elizabeth's letter : but what man with the feelings of humanity alive in his bosom would have disobeyed the voice of an angel like Elizabeth, pleading for aid, and confessing her attachment ? compassion, esteem, admiration, and gratitude, all united to produce a sentiment in his heart

heart which, if not love, was at least very like it; a sentiment, which doubtless would soon have been love itself, had not unfortunately Oh! lady, you for whom I trace these lines, and for whose decision (when my task is done) I shall wait with such anxiety, this is a chasm, which I leave to be filled up by *you*!

Elizabeth disappeared—the lovers were overtaken—the Count of Torrenburg, when the circumstances were all made known to him, resigned his pretensions with a good grace. The entreaties of Elizabeth's brother, and some little apprehension lest her reputation should suffer injury by this elopement, induced her parents to withdraw their opposition to her union with young Montfort. The marriage-day arrived:

Ida

Ida flew to congratulate her friend; and instead of the enamoured bridegroom and the happy bride, she beheld Erwin Melthal stretched pale and senseless at the feet of the alarmed and astonished Elizabeth. As Elizabeth saw Henry's colour change, she sprang towards him, and clasped his hand. Hastily he drew it back with a look of horror, sank on the ground, and closed his eyes as if to eternal slumber.

She now turned to Ida, who (supported by her sister) appeared more dead than living: she demanded the meaning of this extraordinary scene. Terror and astonishment sealed up the lips of Ida; and Constantia also was silent through doubt, whether an explanation just then would be adviseable.

—“ A strange instance of love at first
2 sight !”

sight!" whispered to her next neighbour, a virgin aunt of Elizabeth's aged forty-seven.

—"And mutual too, as it seems!" replied the plump dowager, to whom this audible whisper had been address.

Ha! at those words how high swelled the proud bosom of Elizabeth! How fiery was the glance like lightning, which she threw upon Ida, as she turned away! How contemptuous was the look, with which she eyed young Montfort, in whom the care of his servants had just produced some faint signs of returning animation. Her impetuous spirit had always rendered her too susceptible of sudden and violent passion, and (to confess the truth) had already betrayed her into the commission of many a hasty and ill-judged action. Without waiting
for

for further explanation she rushed out of the chapel, while her eyes flashed fire as she went. She was followed by all those, who envied the sisters ; and who were now resolved to devote a day, long destined to happiness, to the nourishment of suspicion and resentment ; and who were prepared to use their utmost arts to render the wounds lately given to love and friendship incurable.

I will not attempt to describe the state of Ida's mind. Constantia (who, though not more able to unravel the mystery of these unexpected occurrences, was yet more collected than her sister) judged it prudent for them to withdraw as soon as possible from the curious gaze of the by-standers. Accordingly, she conducted the bewildered Ida to her apartment, and then hastened

to

to that of the bride, in order that, she might at once offer explanations and receive them in return. She had not yet sufficiently recovered from her first astonishment to conceive, how strong an impression to her sister's prejudice the scene, which had just taken place, must have made upon Elizabeth: much less did she suppose it possible, that her friend could act so unjustly as to show resentment against herself for an action, which (even if wrong) had at any rate been committed by another.

Her surprise therefore was great, when she was refused admittance to Elizabeth, with every mark of harshness and indignation.—She returned sorrowing from her fruitless embassy; and she had scarcely regained her own apartment, before a Chamberlain made his appear-

appearance there to inform the sisters in the name of the Lord of the Castle, that in consequence of Elizabeth's sudden indisposition, and of the late confusion (the cause of which was too well known to them) to make any explanation on that head necessary) it would be advisable for them immediately to quit a house, in which certainly no bridal ceremony would be celebrated at present.

In the mean while, Henry on opening his eyes cast his first glances eagerly towards the spot, where he fancied, that the spirits of Tell's grand-daughters had appeared to him ; they were no longer to be seen. He was now confirmed in his visionary notions, and implicitly believed, that he had really seen an apparition.—He inquired for Elizabeth : the answer was, that she had quitted

the

the chapel evidently in displeasure; very little reflection was necessary to make him aware, that the singular part which he had just been playing, made it necessary for him to hasten to his bride without delay, and explain the cause of his mysterious behaviour. While approaching her chamber, he considered with himself, whether it would, or would not, be advisable to inform her of the vision, which had just appeared to him, and to lay open to her the secret history of his early life! His deliberations, however, were quite superfluous; for he was denied admittance to Elizabeth with no less positiveness and contempt, than had been shown on Constantia's application.

He felt, that Elizabeth had some reason to think herself insulted; and instead

stead of repaying her scorn with scorn, he lost no time in justifying himself in the eyes of his offended mistress.—A personal interview was denied him; the explanation therefore could only be conveyed in writing; but Henry was not sufficiently an adept in penmanship to permit his finishing so long an apology with as much expedition, as the nature of the case made desirable. He resolved therefore to employ a secretary; and as upon inquiry no ready writer was to be found in the whole Castle except the family Chaplain (whom I have already mentioned as the secretly of Father Hilarius, and as being entirely in the Count of Torrenburg's interests) he requested his assistance. He might have chosen from among a
thousand,

thousand, and yet could not have confided his affairs to a more improper instrument. However, Henry dictated, and the Friar wrote as follows.

Henry to Elizabeth.

You are -offended, my beloved!—
Nay, even to myself it scarcely appears
credible, that when I stood with you
before the altar, I should have withdrawn
my hand from yours; that I should
have hesitated to pronounce the words,
which would have made you mine for
ever; that when you looked upon me
with eyes of love, I could have looked
on any other than on *you*.—No; this
never could have happened by natural
means; the enemies of our love must
have employed infernal arts to delude
my senses and interrupt my happiness!
—What past this evening in the Chapel
must certainly have been produced by
magic;

magic ; no otherwise can I account for it !

Elizabeth, my heart was once another's : my heart would *still* have been another's, had not death torn her from me. But my Rosanna has long been an angel in Heaven ; the truth which I swore to her, and which (while she had life) I never would have violated, could not surely extend beyond the precincts of the grave. Surely that happy-one, to whom now all things must be known, must also know, in what degree I once loved *her*, and in what degree I now love Elizabeth : Surely, she cannot envy you, my beloved, the hand of your poor Henry ; surely, she would not forsake her own mansions of peace and bliss, to forbid our union and destroy our hopes of happiness ?

And

And yet, Elizabeth.....! Mark, my beloved, and conceive my astonishment, my horror!—And yet, Elizabeth, I swear to you most solemnly, that this evening as you stood at the altar, I saw the form of the long-deceased Rosanna Tell approach, and place the myrtle wreath upon your forehead; while by her side stood a second apparition in a religious habit, the exact resemblance of Mary, Rosanna's sister, who is buried with her in the same tomb!

But strange as this circumstance appears, let it not disturb your tranquillity, my Elizabeth, nor prevent an union, on which I depend for all the happiness of my future life. If the spirit of Rosanna *really* appeared, she came not to destroy the bliss of the man who adored her, but to give her celestial sanction:

but for my own part, I am persuaded, that this appearance was some illusion, some contrivance of those who envy us, some magical appearance produced by monastic arts in the night and secrecy of the Cloister.——

Beloved Elizabeth, admit me to your presence, and every point shall be explained most fully. At present I must break off, for the person (whose pen I employ to trace these lines) has taken offence at an expression which accidentally escaped me, and refuses any longer to render me his services.

IN truth, Henry's ecclesiastical secretary was greatly displeased at the words "monastic arts:" however, an apology and some pieces of gold not only brought the avaricious Monk into good-humour again, but even induced him to offer to be the bearer of his letter, in case the young Lord of Montfort should still think proper to send it, after hearing what he (the Monk) had to say upon the subject.

Henry gave him permission to speak, and promised to be attentive.

—"You believe then," began Father Jacob, "that the form, whose appearance so greatly surprized you in the Chapel belonged to a deceased person?"

D 2

—Count

—Count of Montfort, it was the living Rosanna, Tell whom you beheld ; Rosanna, who has now exchanged that name for the more lofty one of Ida of Werdenberg—You start?—You believe what I tell you to be impossible?—Nay, Count, with all my heart! Number *me* (if you like it) among those, who wish to impede you in the gratification of your new amours : it would be ill-breeding in me to force upon you the conviction of a truth, to which you are evidently so unwilling to give credit!”—

The crafty Friar rose, as if about to quit the apartment. It is superfluous to say, that Henry (whose head was now assailed by astonishment from a new quarter) did not suffer him to depart.—Father Jacob possess the whole of Ida’s history, except in so far as related to her
ad-

adventure with Erwin Melthal: he refused to communicate any portion of his knowledge, till this hitherto unsuspected circumstance had been fully explained to him. This demand was complied with, every circumstance was confided to him; and with astonishing quickness he discerned in this narrative the means of attaining an object, which he and his honest ally, the keeper of Count Frederick's conscience, had very nearly at heart, but which they had found themselves compelled to abandon in despair.

Montfort had finished.—And now the Monk exerted all his eloquence to convince his auditor of that, which Henry's heart was already most anxious to believe; namely, that his first oaths of love ought to be the most binding; that it was no less necessary to keep his faith to Ida of Werdenberg than to Ro-

sanna Tell; and that his giving that hand to Elizabeth, which he had sworn to give to another, would only serve to form an union unjust, sinful, abominable, and accursed.

Henry was quite of the Monk's opinion, long before his oration came to an end. Of much more consequence did it now appear to him to renew his vows to the long-lost late-found Ida, than to appease the indignation of the offended Elizabeth. Joy and anxiety almost bereft him of understanding. The Monk was commissioned to procure for him an immediate interview with Ida; and when Father Jacob returned to him with the information, that an hour had already elapsed, since the Damsels of Werdenberg departed from the Castle, he forgot (in his impatience to rejoin his

his mistress) so completely all ideas of propriety, of consideration for the feelings of his bride, and of the misconstructions to which he was making his conduct liable, that without farther deliberation he sprang upon his courser, and pursued the way, which the Monk pointed out to him as that, by which he might the most speedily overtake the sisters. In the hurry of his enthusiastic affection, he forgot every thing else ; he left no apology for the Count of March ; no explanation for Elizabeth ; he even neglected to remind the Monk to deliver his letter, or to desire him to clear up the mystery of his conduct.

In fact, Father Jacob had other business upon his hands, than to extenuate Montfort's offence in the eyes of Elizabeth.

beth. Immediately on the youth's departure, he lost no time in transmitting the following letter to the family-priest of Torrenburg.

Father Jacob to Father Hilarius.

BEFORE this letter can reach you, doubtless the occurrences of this evening will be already known to you : but learn from me some circumstances, which are as yet a secret to all but myself and the principal actors in them. —Erwin Melthal, that peasant youth on whose perfections and on whose attachment you have heard Ida dwell with such enthusiasm, proves to be no other than Henry of Montfort.—Elizabeth is still ignorant of this previous acquaintance, and must remain so : with the sisters she is likely to have no immediate intercourse, and by my management

Henry has left the Castle of March in pursuit of Ida ; though to gain time, I thought it prudent to give him a false direction, and he is now upon the road to the half-ruined Fortress, which the Count of Torrenburg possesses in Thuringia.

Let your patron lose no time in hastening hither—I will take care, that he shall find the family disposed to consider his renewed proposals as a most honourable and fortunate event ; and I doubt not, in the first tumult of her passions, of disappointed love, violated friendship, and raging jealousy, Elizabeth may be easily persuaded to an union, which will make her mistress of that rival's fate, to whose pernicious beauty she ascribes the loss of her own promised happiness.

Be assured, it will be greatly both for your advantage and for mine, that Elizabeth should become Count Frederick's wife. He is advanced in years; it is highly improbable, that he should have children; and a rich bequest is already secured to our convent in the event of his dying without legitimate descendants. On the other hand, should he remain unmarried, there is every probability of his acknowledging the Damsels of Werdenberg as his heiresses; a step, which would ruin all our hopes, for ever, but which (you may depend upon it) he will never be suffered to take, if the jealous and incensed Elizabeth becomes Countess of Torrenburg.

With regard to these hated girls, whose intrusion is so greatly adverse to

our interests, no means must be neglected for expelling them from their guardian's house and favour. As to Constantia, I look upon her as little dangerous, being (to judge by every appearance) entirely devoted to a religious life: it would therefore be unnecessary to molest her, were not her fate so closely connected with her sister's, that it is impossible to separate the one from the other. But it is against Ida that all your skill must be directed.—Doubtless, Elizabeth's letters are still in her possession—Seize them, either by art or violence, it matters not which: they must necessarily contain matter sufficient to convince Count Frederick, that it was by her advice, that her friend was persuaded to elope from him with young Montfort: he

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will

will look upon her as the traverser of his views upon Elizabeth, and that will be sufficient to banish her from his favour—this will be greatly confirmed by the appearance of the sisters at Elizabeth's wedding, which he cannot but consider as highly disrespectful to himself and his feelings; but you must carefully conceal from him, that Ida confined in the solitude of Torrenburg Castle, and Constantia buried in the silence of her Convent, were both ignorant of the rejected lover's name till after their arrival at the Castle of March. The Count is noble-minded; but he is proud, irascible, easily induced to believe the worst of those who surround him, and obstinate in retaining prejudices once received—these are the parts

parts of his character, upon which it must be your care to work, till you have kindled a flame against Ida in his bosom, which all her tears will be unable to extinguish. On the other hand, you must assail Ida with terrors of her uncle's indignation, and with threats of an immediate union with her superannuated admirer, Count Egbert : and when you have terrified her sufficiently to prevent her conduct from being regulated by her understanding, assure her, that there is no way of avoiding Count Frederick's wrath and old Montfort's marriage-bed, except flight from the Castle of Torrenburg.—That step once taken, Ida is ruined ; Constantia may easily be convicted of participation in her sister's actions ; the ungrateful girls will be banished

banished from their uncle's favour irrevocably, and then the game will be all our own.—Farewell, and let me hear from you with all diligence.

THE unconscious subject of these abominable artifices was in the meanwhile journeying homewards with a heavy heart, doubly afflicted by the injustice of her friend, and the supposed perfidy of her lover. She had ascertained no more before her departure from the Castle of March, than that the man, whom she had so long believed to be a peasant's son, was Count Henry of Montfort; but it still remained unexplained, how Henry could have so totally forgotten his former vows, and have offered his hand to another. The more that she reflected, the less reason did there appear to doubt, that upon discovering his own noble origin he had

aban-

abandoned all thoughts of an union with the low-born daughter of William Tell. In the opinion of love this fault was not to be excused; she in some degree obtained a forced tranquillity by resolving, that his conduct had rendered him totally unworthy of her; and that even should the inconstant Henry return to her chains, it would be beneath Ida of Werdenberg to accept that hand, which he had insolently withdrawn from the humble Rosanna Tell.

Constantia accompanied her sister for some part of her journey, but was at length unwillingly compelled to separate from her and return to her convent, attended by the vassals whom the Abbess of Zurich had sent for her protection. Ida reached her guardian's Castle without meeting any adventure; but a
mistake

mistake of her attendants occasioned her to go considerably out of her road, and this delay gave time for Father Jacob's letter to precede her at the Castle of Torrenburg, Father Hilarius lost no time in searching for Elizabeth's letters; he found them, and found them also such, as he wished. Some, which would have exculpated Ida, and made against Elizabeth, he committed to the flames, and then lost no time in communicating the rest to his patron.

Count Frederick had returned home on Elizabeth's bridal-day, which he intended to pass with his niece in silent melancholy. He had resolved to inquire into her character with more attention, than he had done hitherto; and as his late disappointment had made him give up all thoughts of marriage for himself,

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it was his intention to declare that the damsels of Werdenberg were his future heiresses, in case they should prove to deserve so great a distinction.

On his arrival he inquired for Ida; he was informed, that she was gone to the wedding of the young Countess of March.—He started in astonishment, and father Hilarius shook his head with a smile. Frederick enquired, how the girl could have ventured to take a step, which he could not but look upon as a marked token of disrespect? or if she were ignorant of his having payed his addresses to Elizabeth, why had not father Hilarius prevented her from unconsciously offering him this public affront? the worthy Chaplain shrugged his shoulders, and answered that—
“ Good-lack! he was too old and too
simple

simple to look after a young wanton girl with the devil (heaven bless us!) in her head.”—

—“ She slipped away,” continued he, “ without saying a word of her intention to me, or to any one—and as to her *ignorance* of your addresses. . . . Blessed St. Barnabas! she knew much more about them, than I did myself!—Why, my lord, I have just discovered, that she has long kept up a secret correspondence with the Lady Elizabeth; and I can bring you the most undeniable proofs, that you would at this moment have been happy in the possession of your bride, had it not been for Ida, for the self-created heiress of Torrenburg; who instigated her innocent friend to refuse your hand; who fooled her into an imaginary passion for young Montfort;

Montfort; and when she had entangled the poor Elizabeth too closely in this intrigue to admit of her retreating with honour, who finally persuaded her to adopt the disgraceful measure of an elopement.—Yet to say truth, there is some excuse for Ida's conduct, since she could not but heartily wish to prevent a marriage so extremely detrimental to her own views and interests.”—

Frederick heard every word with increasing amazement. In a voice of fury he demanded, that the proofs, of which the Monk had spoken, should be instantly produced.—Father Hilarius then gave Elizabeth's letters into his hand, accompanying them with some reflections on the danger of teaching women the art of writing; at the same time

time reminding the Count, how strenuously and how frequently he had represented to him, that in the hands of so forward a girl as Ida, there could not possibly be a more dangerous instrument than a pen ; and that to leave her to the full as ignorant as he found her, was an object most desirable both for the Count and for herself.—But his remonstrances had been disregarded ; Ida was taught to write ; and now see the blessed effects of it !

Elizabeth's hand was not to be mistaken ; and while the Count gazed upon the writing so well known to him, the malicious Priest inflamed his resentment still further by relating various passages of Ida's early life, to which he well knew how to give that colouring, which suited best with his designs ;

he related, how during the time that she was believed to be Tell's granddaughter, Ida had greatly shocked her companions by her free and dissolute manners; he proceeded to state, that in consequence her guardians had been obliged to separate her from Constantia, lest the one should be perverted by the bad example of the other; that regret at finding all his efforts to reclaim her in vain, had broken the heart of her adopted father, and sent him with sorrow to his grave: that she had carried on an intrigue with a man of low birth, to whom she was still attached; and that in all probability it was her intention to enrich this peasant with the valuable inheritance, which she expected to derive from Count Frederick's bounty.

—“ And

—“ And then” continued Father Hilarius, casting a malicious side-glance upon Ida’s claims; “ and then how easy will it be for the young fellow to vamp up some fine story of an unexpected discovery, and of a relationship to some illustrious family long concealed, and thus qualify himself for assuming openly the proud name of *Count of Torrenburg*, in right of his wife, her generous uncle’s heiress!”—

The Count bit his lip: yet after a long silence he answered, that Ida’s parentage and claims admitted of no doubt; and that he wished most heartily, that she were any other person, in order that in pronouncing his judgment upon her conduct, she might have been entitled to less consideration and respect.

—“ But

—“ But in spite of all her faults,” said he, “ I cannot deal harshly with a person, who is the daughter of my deceased friend, and of the woman whom I once adored. Yet on the other hand, such mean artifices, such acts of interested baseness, of such flagrant ingratitude, ought not to escape without due punishment.—Ida has destroyed the happiness, which I promised myself in marriage ; it will be no more than a just vengeance, if I destroy hers in return.—Should she fail to exculpate herself, she shall either be immured for life within the walls of a Cloister, or give her hand without delay to the old Count of Montfort, from whom I this morning received proposals for her hand.”—

When he pronounced this sentence, the Count was standing in an open

balcony : as the last words fell from his lips, he saw Ida with her attendants riding slowly towards the Castle. He hastily drew back ; and feeling, that he was at that time too much incensed to give her cause an impartial hearing, he ordered Father Hilarius to fill his place—the Friar exulted at this command : he knew well the generosity of his patron's nature, and dreaded that irresistible conviction, which ever accompanies the pleading of injured innocence : he therefore heard with great satisfaction, that the cause was not to be tried by a judge, the goodness of whose own heart would naturally incline him to the side of mercy, justice, and compassion.

Ida had scarcely divested herself of her bridal robes, when a procession

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entered

entered her chamber composed of the chief officers of the Count's household, and headed by the reverend Father Hilarius. The formal manner of their entrance, and the gravity which reigned in every countenance, were alone sufficient to communicate to her mind some degree of confusion and alarm.—

How greatly were these emotions increased, when the Chaplain began his examination, which was preceded by a terrible description of her guardian's anger, and which consisted of questions so artfully worded, that taken by surprise and bewildered as she was, she found herself constrained either to return no answers at all, or such as were apparently to her disadvantage.—Sensible of this at length, she entreated, that time might be allowed her for

recollection: the greatest part of her auditors were well inclined to the poor suppliant, and felt for her the most sincere compassion. The Monk therefore did not dare to act towards her with all the harshness, to which his heart prompted him; the further examination of this affair was postponed to three hours after sunrise of the next day, and Ida was left alone.

It was midnight.—Ida sat weeping, while a variety of unpleasant images crowded before her imagination, and retraced the many singular and painful transactions, of which that day had been a witness. Interesting as had been the events which took place at the Castle of March, still her mind was most occupied by those more recent ones, which surprised her at her return home.—“ Her guardian Elizabeth’s rejected bridegroom.”—

groom.”—“Herself accused of having broken off his marriage.”—“*Some* offences laid to her charge, which were totally incomprehensible.”—“*Others*, of which she was conscious, that her unguarded conduct had made her but too liable to be suspected.”—“The Count’s violent resentment.”—“His threats.”—“Expulsion from the Castle of Torrenburg.”—“The only choice, allowed her, the cloister for life, or an union with the decrepit Count Egbert.”—Poor, poor Ida! how wilt thou find a clue to guide thy bewildered steps aright through such a labyrinth of dangers!

Buried in these melancholy reflections, she heard not the door unlocked, by which her apartments communicated with the public gallery.—At length a hand gently removed the handkerchief,

with which she had covered her face, She looked up, and beheld Father Hilarius.

—“Alas! my dear child,” said the Friar, “what avails your weeping?—believe me, your affairs are not in so ill a state, as you may imagine; though I cannot but confess, that appearances are greatly against you. Your secret correspondence with Elizabeth has been intercepted: I have tried in vain to convince your guardian, that you were ignorant of his having any concern in the affair. Then he looks on your presence at the marriage, as a personal and designed affront. It appears indeed from one of her letters, that your friend herself was in great doubt, whether you would accept her invitation. At the very time of her giving it, she pointed out the inconveniences

inconveniences of your coming; she warned you, that you would incur your uncle's anger. And yet in defiance of this warning, you went!—As to the confusion, which your presence produced at the wedding, of that we can make out nothing; you either *will* not, or *can* not explain the mystery; one thing only I can collect from your account, which is, that you have made a number of enemies there, who will spare no pains to injure you, and to prevent your innocence from being made clear to the Count.—For that you *are* innocent, I have no manner of doubt; and I will venture to assert, that in process of time. . . . But time indeed, Heaven help us! that is exactly what is refused you—the punishment of your supposed offences will be im-

mediate! the old Count of Montfort arrived here not an hour ago; and your guardian is determined, that to-morrow shall decide the destiny of your future life. Of your guilt he is thoroughly persuaded, and you will be compelled to-morrow to give your hand to Count Egbert, if he will condescend to accept it; or if the old man thinks that your conduct has now made you unworthy of such an honour, you will be immediately confined for life in the Convent of the Grey Penitents near Count Frederick's Thuringian Castle."—

—"And what then must be done?" cried Ida, wringing her hands in fear and agony?—"How can I escape so dreadful a destiny?"—

—"Escape?" repeated the Monk.—

"Ha! right! right! my dear child, it

was

was surely Heaven, that inspired you with the thought!—Yes! you must escape; you must fly from the Castle of Torrenburg!”—

—“Escape? fly?”—repeated the bewildered Ida; “and whither must I go?”—

“To a retreat,” replied the Monk, “where you may wait in security, till your uncle’s resentment is appeased, and your innocence can be made clear to him.—But you shall know more, as we go along. I know a secret passage, by which you may quit the Castle unobserved. Follow me, for you have not a moment to lose!—Nay, come, come! away!”—

Thus saying, he caught the lamp from the table with one hand, and grasping Ida’s arm with the other, he

drew her from the chamber.—Bewildered, terrified, she had not presence of mind sufficient to form a resolution; and her exhausted frame was unable to resist the force, with which he urged her forwards, as she followed him through the long galleries, rather passively submitting, than wilfully consenting to his design.

I formerly mentioned, that Count Frederick still resided on the spot, which had once been the habitation of the antient Counts of Carlsheim and Sargans. To this he had chiefly been induced by the beauty of the situation; perhaps too his pride was secretly gratified by the recollection, that his residence was the same with that, whence his ancestors were accustomed to extend the sceptre of command over the surrounding

surrounding provinces, and to set at defiance the resentment of many a sovereign prince, who possessed much more lofty-sounding titles but much less real power and strength.—Still the gloomy, half-ruined Castle of Sargans was by no means a mansion suited to the taste of its modern possessor. Accordingly he had levelled to the ground the remains of a wing of this gigantic pile, which had formerly been destroyed by fire, and had erected in its place a stately palace, at once noble in its external form, and convenient in its interior accommodations. This was called the Castle of Torrenburg; while the forsaken halls and towers of Sargans were still distinguished by the name of the “Donat-Fortress.” the two buildings were separated by courts of con-

siderable extent ; the antient one was in a great measure suffered to go to ruin, except a few apartments which were kept up for the accommodation of domestics, when on solemn occasions the number of guests was too great to be received within the walls of the Count's own residence.

Superstition had not failed to extend her dominion over the Donat-Fortress.—Traditions respecting the former Counts of Carlsheim and Sargans, which had been handed down from father to son, and with which you, Elizabeth, are already well acquainted, furnished subjects sufficient for a thousand wonderful stories. In truth, the prejudice, in favour of the opinion that the ruins were haunted, was so prevalent, that not merely among the Count's domestics,

domestics, but even among the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages numbers of ghost-seers were to be found, who had beheld at sundry times (and with their own eyes) the spirits of Ethelbert and Urania, of Donat, Helen, and other traditionary personages, wandering among those abandoned halls and moss-grown towers; and they augured either favourable or inauspicious events to the reigning possessor, according as the vision represented a lady or a Monk, an innocent wife or her haughty tyrant husband.

Ida's character is naturally extremely timid, and she had not escaped the contagion of superstitious terrors. It was therefore with no slight emotion, that she found her conductor taking the way, which led to the ruins.

—“ Whither are you leading me ?” said she frequently, as she followed him with trembling steps.—“ Whither are you leading me ?” she again demanded almost with a shriek ; and as she snatched her hand from the Friar’s, her blood froze in her veins at perceiving, that she had now past the last of the separating courts, and stood before the massy walls and lofty round towers of the Donat-Fortress, whose colossal portal seemed to stretch wide its enormous jaws, as if for the purpose of devouring her.

Father Hilarius was now compelled to stop for a moment, and support his fainting companion. She reclined her head against his shoulder ; and when she had in some degree recovered her spirits, she related to him, that happen-
ing

ing once to be standing in her balcony at midnight; she had seen with her own eyes the apparitions of two Monks come out of the very gate, before which they were at that moment standing; that they went up to the old well in the corner, whose mouth is overgrown with moss and weeds, and there they seemed to vanish; and that upon relating what she had seen the next morning, the old portress had related to her a terrible history of two Monks belonging to the Abbey of Curwald, who were starved to death in a subterraneous dungeon by the order of one of the tyrant-counts of Carlsheim; that their bones were buried in that ruined well, in which Heaven's retribution had ordained, that the murderer himself should perish; and that ever
since

since that time, the place had been haunted by the ghosts of the two unfortunate Friars.

Father Hilarius, who frequently made use of the deserted fortress, when he had any secret business to transact, could have easily removed the miraculous part of the appearances, which Ida had seen; but it did not suit his plans to quiet her anxiety by letting her into the truth. He contented himself with painting in the strongest colours the dangers, which awaited her on her return to the Count's abode; and with reminding her, that her only chance of avoiding those dangers was an instantaneous flight by means, whose terrors were merely imaginary.

The priest, in spite of all his seeming simplicity,

simplicity, was by no means deficient in eloquence. His descriptions were so lively, and his arguments came so home to her feelings, that Ida was soon convinced, that she could meet with no ghost more terrible or more hideous than the old Count of Montfort. She therefore resolved to follow her guide without further remonstrance, and only requested that she might shut her eyes, and clasp one of his hands with both of hers in the form of a cross, which holy sign (she doubted not) would scare all evil spirits away. To this he consented, and promised to inform her when she should be arrived in a place of safety, and might relieve herself from this voluntary loss of sight.

As they proceeded, the Monk lighted several torches of yellow wax, which

were

were fastened at intervals against the sides of a long passage, opening into a large hall; he took the same precaution, as he ascended a lofty marble staircase; and as soon as he entered a spacious saloon, he lost no time in illuminating twelve large chandeliers of brass, which were suspended from the roof.—He now desired Ida to open her eyes, and look round her.

He could not have pitched upon a better method for dissipating Ida's fears of ghosts and goblins. Darkness is the mother of causeless terror; with the return of light, courage and confidence return to the trembling heart. The lamp, with which the Friar was still busied in lighting the last chandelier, assured her, that there was nothing supernatural in the light, by which she
found

found herself surrounded ; and her heart expanded with the agreeable impression, produced upon her by this sudden and unexpected splendour.

She had always pictured to herself the Donat-Fortress, as the residence of crows, bats, and screech-owls, a gloomy chaos of dirt, and dust, and fragments of moth-eaten furniture. How greatly then was she surprized to find, that though everything in truth was faded and antiquated, yet nothing could be more magnificent than the saloon, which she was then examining. It was hung with tapestry richly wrought and adorned with pictures, on whose frames gold and carving had been lavished most profusely : and through the open door she looked out upon the illuminated marble staircase, and down the long

long gallery, whose vista of lights presented an object at once noble and agreeable. Father Hilarius advised her to repose herself for a few minutes, and conducted her to an elevated seat under a canopy, which seemed like a throne.

—“It was here,” said he “that the antient lords of the ten jurisdictions were accustomed to receive the homage of their vassals, while that anti-chamber was thronged with their knights and retainers; and it was from yonder side-chambers, that crouds of the noblest dames and damsels of the country looked out, and admired the magnificence of the powerful Counts of Carlshheim and Sargans.”—

Ida would not cast a single glance towards the side-chambers, where the dames and damsels of former days
used

used to assemble, for in these there were no torches; and she could not help fearing, lest she should discover in them some inhabitant of the other world made visible by the light of his own burning brimstone. She therefore continued to look towards the illuminated gallery, and listened with pleased attention to Father Hilarius, while he dwelt upon the brighter parts of the family traditions, and by descriptions of splendid feasts and stately tournaments, contrived to beguile the trembling girl of her terrors.

—"But we forget ourselves," said the Monk at length, suddenly breaking off his narration, "we must not suffer day-light to surprise us in these untenanted apartments, where we should undoubtedly be sought after, and then

if

if found what would be the consequence? you would be consigned to the arms of the decrepit Egbert, while I should be sent back to my Convent with indignation by your uncle. Come, lady, come! follow me, where peace and security await your arrival.”—

—“Lead on, good father!” replied Ida; “be you but my guide, and I will not hesitate to follow.”—

—“Good!” said Hilarius; and then extinguishing some of the lights, he took them from the chandeliers.—
“Then take special care of these tapers; they will be necessary for us on the way, by which we must escape. Now then hasten onwards, and be alarmed at nothing, which you may encounter. Be assured, there is no real danger.”—

Thus saying, he gave her a small
basket

basket, which already appeared to contain some provisions, and in which he now deposited the tapers. These preparations for a long journey through gloomy ways were by no means calculated to preserve in Ida's mind that temporary tranquillity, which it had so lately recovered. An involuntary shuddering seized her ; and as he lighted her forwards, he assured her so often of his acting honestly by her, that she began to suspect, that it must be his intention to deceive her.

They at length reached the most remote quarter of the Donat-Fortress, which by no means corresponded with the magnificence of those apartments, by which she had approached it. Here nothing was to be seen but winding staircases, narrow passages, low roofs, and gloomy vaulted

vaulted dungeons, without end or number, whose labyrinth bewildered her memory, and whose aspect appalled her imagination. Most of them bore the strongest marks of the ravages of time : and now they entered an immense chamber, which according to the Monk's account had at one period been the bedroom of the Countess Urania, and of many of the ladies, her successors.—A large vacant alcove still decorated with the remnants of silken curtains, appeared to have once been intended to contain a bed, and confirmed the assertion of Father Hilarius ; an assertion, which the other ornaments of the room seemed calculated to contradict. Swords, spears, and coats of mail were fastened against the walls, and gave the apartment more the appearance of a well-furnished armoury,

moury, than of a lady's bed chamber.

Ida was on the point of asking the meaning of such unusual decorations, when her conductor removed a part of the worm-eaten tapestry, and opened a concealed door, through which she descried a staircase descending to a far greater depth, than her eye could reach.

—"Here is our way," said Hilarius, "tremble not, my child, but follow me without hesitation.—A few hours will place you in safety."—

Ida shrunk back, and weeping through extreme terror, inquired, whether this was the only means of escaping?—The Friar, who had already found out the quickest method of removing her apprehensions, descended part of the staircase, and as he past, kindled some tapers

fixed on the ballustrade. This experiment succeeded, as it had done before—Ida ventured down a few steps, and the Monk returned to assist her to descend the remainder ; when suddenly springing past her, he rushed up the staircase, and passing through the door, closed it after him with a loud noise.

How the blood ran cold in the poor girl's veins, when she found herself forsaken by her guide; how she hastened after him, in hopes of inducing him by entreaties to release her from this unexpected captivity; how she shuddered at being able to discover no traces of the concealed door; and how she at length sank down upon the steps in agony and despair, when she found no answer returned to her shrieks for relief and mercy, all this I need not

describe to Elizabeth : her own good and tender heart will make her feel for the situation of a young creature, by nature the most fearful of her sex, exposed to all the horrors of night, solitude, and silence, at the entrance of a chain of gloomy caverns, whose existence till that moment had been unknown to her, and with whose outlet she was totally unacquainted.

Though she received no answer, she was certain, that her entreaties for help were not unheard by the unpitying Friar. She could plainly distinguish his footsteps, as he hastened away from the chamber ; and the noise of closing doors and of bolts shooting back into their fastenings left her no room to doubt her being totally abandoned.

Ida washerself unconscious, how much time elapsed, before she could summon strength of mind sufficient to reflect, how it would be most adviseable for her to conduct herself in this perilous situation. Undoubtedly, before she could recover from the shock, a considerable period must have elapsed; for when she at length looked around her, she perceived, that the torches were on the point of expiring. The dread of being left in total darkness recalled her to herself: she sprang from the ground, and lost no time in kindling one of the tapers, with which the Monk (who was far from wishing her destruction) had providently supplied her basket.

—“ He does not then desire my death?” said she, as she saw the flame rise bright and cheerful, and a kind of doubtful

doubtful joy infused itself into her almost frozen heart.

This persuasion was confirmed, when faintness compelled her to examine the contents of her basket. Father Hilarius (who was no enemy to the pleasures of the table) had furnished it, as if he had been catering for himself: the provisions were the most delicate of their kind, and a small flask of costly and cordial wine had not been forgotten. Now then she began to think, what could have been his object in conducting her to this gloomy abode? It was evident, that he had not left her there to perish through hunger: was it possible, that he had meant honestly by her, and that this was really the best path, which she could take to quit the Castle? Suddenly, it struck her, that during their

midnight wandering the Monk had frequently mentioned a subterraneous passage, which conducted to a small hamlet inhabited in former times by holy Hermits, and now the abode of simple villagers scarcely less pure in manners than their predecessors. He had described this passage to her with such minuteness, that she could not but suppose his account to have contained instructions for the direction of her progress ; she had at the time paid but little attention to his remarks, not conceiving that she was at all interested in the subject ; but she now carefully mustered up every hint which he had let fall, and employed her whole strength of mind in recalling the instructions, which he had given with such apparent indifference.

Having

Having at length traced the map of her road on her imagination sufficiently to make her hope, that she should be able to find her way through the gloomy labyrinth, she ventured to begin her journey. She carefully avoided various low-vaulted passages, which presented themselves on either side of her, and which Father Hilarius had already warned her not to enter; as he said, that they only led to small dungeons, in which many victims of the tyrant Counts of Carlsheim and Sargans had breathed their last, and which now formed the unwholesome abode of toads, snakes, and other loathsome reptiles. Apprehensive that her light might fail her, before she could reach the outlet of these caverns, she fled onwards with all her speed, and hoped with every mo-

ment, that the next would show her the magnificent tomb, raised by Count Herman of Werdenberg in honour of his wife the lady Emmeline, who had been long imprisoned in this subterraneous abode. The sight of this monument would assure her, that she had not mistaken the way ; and the Monk had told her, that she would there find three paths branching out, of which the middle one would conduct her without a turning to the cavern's mouth.

But still she hastened on, and still one taper after the other was consumed, and still the tomb was not to be descried ! Sleep, and fatigue from the length of the way, began to operate upon her with force almost irresistible ; yet did she not dare to close her eyes, lest during her slumber the taper should burn out,
and

and leave her in absolute darkness to wander through the long chain of dungeons and passages, till she perished. In this painful situation her only advantage was, that her imaginary fears gradually subsided. Custom and necessity are frequently the parents of virtue; and Ida, the timid superstitious Ida, who so lately could only traverse the chambers of the Donat-Fortress with eyes closed, hands crost, and knees trembling, was now able to tread firmly, as she hurried along, and feared not to gaze steadfastly on the surrounding gloom, with which she was now become familiar.

The poor wanderer could only judge from the consumption of her tapers, that she must have journeyed for a considerable time, and that the mouth of

the caverns could be at no great distance —this belief was confirmed, when she perceived a faint pale light glimmering through the obscurity of a narrow passage, which lay before her. The sight inspired her with renewed vigour. She hastened towards the gleam : but how did her spirits fail her, when after proceeding for some minutes down the passage she found, that the light proceeded (not from the day, as she had fondly hoped) but from a lamp, which served to illuminate with its blue rays a place, the sight of which a few days sooner would have made her swoon with horror, and upon which even now she had but too much reason to look with apprehension and disgust.

It was a round vaulted room, whose sides were hollowed out into niches, in each

each of which a coffin was placed ; while here and there the eye rested on a stately marble monument adorned with carved work and statues.—Ida shrieked, and the taper fell from her hand.

—“ Now then,” she exclaimed, “ I am lost indeed ! What said the Monk ? —Above all, avoid a narrow passage, which lies towards the left ; it conducts into the burying-place of a convent. Should you stray thither, and be discovered by the Nuns, the object of your flight will be lost irrecoverably, and you will only have exchanged one prison for another. The Abbess is entirely devoted to your uncle’s interests, and will not hesitate to restore you to his power.—Alas ! alas !” she continued, wringing her hands, “ how plainly do I now remember every word of his warn-
F 6
ing,

ing, though at the time I little thought of how much consequence it was to my safety!—Now remembrance comes too late! I am fallen into the toils: speedy flight indeed might perhaps yet save me; but sleep sits too heavy on my eyelids, and my wearied limbs are unable to bear me further.—I must yield to the impulse, and repose for a few moments, for I am fatigued almost unto death!—then should no one discover me during my slumbers, when I awake, I can re-kindle my taper at yonder lamp, and shall be able to pursue my pilgrimage with recruited strength and courage.”—

She then lay down upon the floor near her extinguished taper, resting her head against an adjacent tomb; nor was it long before she sank into a profound sleep. Little till then did Ida believe it possible,

ble, that she could sleep among graves and coffins! Still less was she aware, how near she was at that moment to safety and protection! Oh! how would her sorrowing heart have been lightened, had she known, that a few hours must necessarily compel one of her best friends to enter her gloomy resting-place; one, who at that moment was grieving at the relation of her flight from the Castle of Torrenburg, which had reached him under the most scandalous mis-representations, and who was in the most painful uncertainty respecting her fate and the means of saving and supporting her. Ida had unconsciously wandered into the cemetery belonging to the Abbey of Curwald, which was under the direction of her friend and guardian, Abbot

Conrad!—

Conrad!—Oh! how eagerly would he have hastened to embrace and comfort the poor forlorn-one, could some kind angel have whispered to him in a dream.—“Ida, the unfortunate much-injured Ida slumbers among the mouldering bones of the Abbots of Cloister-Curwald!”—

Conrad had dispatched messengers on all sides in pursuit of Ida, as soon as he received the news of her flight, which Count Frederick transmitted to him without delay. It seems, that what Father Hilarius dreaded with so much reason, had actually taken place at the Castle of Torrenburg. No sooner was the first burst of passion over, than the Count's justice made him resolve to give his accused niece a personal hearing—the morning had scarcely dawned, when

when he sought her apartments. Her favourite attendant was ordered to apprize her mistress of his approach: great was his astonishment, when the maid returned extremely agitated, and informed him, that Ida was no where to be found. Father Hilarius was immediately sent for; and his explanation of Ida's motives for flight of course was such, as served greatly to increase his patron's indignation, and throw a still deeper shade upon the character and conduct of the fugitive. Elizabeth's bridegroom had disappeared, immediately after rejecting her hand at the altar; Ida was now become equally invisible: it required no great ingenuity to connect these two events together. Nothing could appear more probable, than that Ida had eloped with Henry,
and

and that she was gone to form an union built upon the ruined happiness of her best friends, and to exult at having duped those, whose good-natured simplicity had prevented them from suspecting her designs.—Count Frederick's generous heart was shocked beyond expression, when he thus saw the offences of his niece presented before him in such gigantic enormity.

—“Monstrous!” he exclaimed! “inconceivable! first she plunges a dagger in the breast of her benefactor, by robbing him of the woman whom he adored; next she stabs her dearest friend to the heart by seducing away the bridegroom, into whose arms she had herself delivered her! now then she believes, that her infernal work is complete; she knows well, that all ideas of an union
between

between me and Elizabeth are prevented for ever ; she doubts not, that vexation and disappointed love will soon conduct me to the grave ; and then she means to divide my rich inheritance with the partner of her iniquities, the false capricious perjured Montfort !”—

Father Hilarius now stepped forward, and represented to him, that it only depended upon himself to ruin the plans of those, who had so grossly offended him ; and that as to his union with Elizabeth, he for his part saw no impossibility in the case. The Count eagerly desired him to explain his meaning ; and the obedient Monk proceeded to prove, with the whole force of his eloquence, that Elizabeth deserved pity rather than blame for her share in these transactions ; that she had
been

been seduced from her duty more by Ida's arts than by her own inclinations; and he declared his perfect conviction, that if the Count would now condescend to make the first advance towards a reconciliation, he would find her as full of penitence for her error, as grateful for his proffered affection, and as eager to unite with him in a plan of mutual revenge, as even the Count himself could desire.—Nor did he make this last assertion rashly. Father Jacob had already apprized him, that every thing at the Castle of March was favourable to their views; and he advised Hilarius to send his patron thither without loss of time, in order that Elizabeth's resentment (upon which he chiefly grounded his hopes of success) might not be allowed time to cool.

Count

Count Frederick took the Friar's advice, which was greatly strengthened by a supposed vision of the Patron Saint of Torrenburg, who had condescended in a dream that very night to assure Father Hilarius, that the consequence of a visit to the Castle of March would be an union with the lovely Elizabeth. Accordingly the Count lost no time in setting out to renew his once-rejected proposals, habited as a bridegroom, and attended by a princely retinue. In the mean while the worthy house-chaplain did not even allow himself time enough to say his paternoster, before he dispatched letters to the Bishop of Coira and Abbot Conrad, in which he related the flight of their ward, the Lady Ida of Werdenberg, in all its circumstances; stating also the
alleged

alleged motives and supposed consequences of this step, and above all not forgetting to place every circumstance in the light most unfavourable to the Heroine of the Tale. As they perused these letters, the Abbot and the good Bishop alternately felt indignation at Ida's errors, pity for her misfortunes, and anxiety for the dangers in which she had involved herself. Willingly would they have believed her innocent ; but appearances were too strong against her, and the Abbot little imagined, that the only person capable of removing the suspicions, which he was so anxious to efface, at that very moment reposed so near him.

In the mean while Ida awoke greatly refreshed by a sound sleep of several hours. She re-kindled her taper, and resumed

resumed her anxious journey; yet she delayed it for a few moments, while she endeavoured to read the inscriptions on the monuments, and ascertain to what order the Abbess belonged, whom Hilarius had described to her in such odious and terrific colours. These clearly exprest, that the tombs were raised in honour of the former Abbots of Cloister-Curwald, in whose cemetery she was standing at that moment: what blessed information for her agitated heart!—the door was unguarded.—A marble staircase conducted to the interior of the Abbey!—But alas! the inscriptions were composed in the Latin language.—Ida vainly endeavoured to comprehend the meaning; and a few moments sufficing to convince her, that her endeavours must be vain, the poor wanderer

wanderer turned away from the neighbourhood of her friend, and hastened to meet her ruin.

With trembling limbs and an heart almost bursting with anxiety, she pursued her gloomy path. She continued to proceed for a considerable time; and her last taper was almost expiring, when its beams fell upon the object, which she had wished to behold so long and so anxiously. She was now certain of having followed the right path, for she saw at a distance the monument of her progenitrix, the noble Emmeline of Sargans.

The polished and shining surface of the white marble reflected from afar the gleam of Ida's taper—the pilgrim hastened towards it with eager joy, not untempered by religious awe and reverential

reverential terror. With scarce-heard foot-fall, as if she dreaded to disturb the dead silence of a place thus sanctified, did Ida ascend the steps leading to this memorial, raised in honour of faithful love and long suffering. It was some minutes, before she could resolve on venturing near enough to examine the statues, with which it was adorned. On one side stood a female angel (the counterpart of the lovely Emmeline) who trod under her feet the symbols of cruelty and voluptuousness, and who extended to a kneeling warrior her right hand, on whose wrist was still fastened part of the chain, which *he* had broken.—On the opposite side appeared the same warrior, who with looks of gratitude held a ring towards Heaven, probably in allusion to the prophetic dream,

dream, which had guided Herman of Werdenberg to the deliverance of his mistress.

—“Spirits of my ancestors!” exclaimed Ida, as overpowered by her sensations she sank on the loftiest step, and kist the hallowed marble; “spirits of Herman and Emmeline, hear the prayer of your forsaken persecuted daughter! *I* suffer now, as *you* once suffered;—*I* am innocent, as *you* were then!—save me, ye blessed-ones! save the heiress of your sorrows!”—

Ida prayed long and fervently.—When she arose, she found that her last taper was exhausted, and had left her in total darkness; this however gave her little concern. The religious duties, in which she had just been engaged, had inspired her heart with
enthusiastic

enthusiastic courage : besides, she knew well, that of the three ways branching out of the circular vault in which she was at that moment, she had only to chuse the middle one, which (as Father Hilarius had informed her) would conduct her straight to the outlet of the subterraneous passages. She ascertained easily by examining the walls, which of the three was the proper path to take, and then hastened boldly forwards ; for she was now persuaded, that the invisible spirits of her ancestors hovered over her, and she dreaded no danger, while protected by those celestial guardians.

The Monk had told her true—the way was straight and unembarrassed with windings : it soon began to ascend, and the delighted wanderer could at

length discover the faint glimmering of daylight, through the distant opening. But alas! however near may be the goal of our wishes, who shall dare to count himself secure of reaching it!— Ida had for some minutes heard a dead hollow noise behind her, and the ill-boding sounds had already occasioned her sufficient anxiety to make her double her speed. Still the noise became more audible: and now she could plainly distinguish the steps of men, whose arms clattered, as they past along. She looked back, and could perceive the glimmering of faint lights at a distance. She rushed forwards with increased rapidity: the sounds, which became every moment louder, convinced her, not only that she was pursued, but that her pursuers gained upon her.—Fortunately,

nately, the opening was now at hand ; she summoned up all her strength and activity to reach it, sprang through it, and found herself once more restored to air and light.

—“ Praised be Heaven, I am safe !” she exclaimed : when at that moment she felt a cold hand seize her by the arm.—She shrieked, and fell on the earth senseless.

It was long, before her recollection returned. When she again unclosed her eyes, she found herself no longer in the open air. She was placed upon a kind of couch, in what she supposed to be a tent ; a group of men of terrible and savage aspect surrounded her ; and seated on a chest at no great distance, she perceived a warrior in complete armour, whose raised visor showed a

countenance wild, 'tis true, but still noble and commanding.

—"At length then we have found her!" said the warrior in a tone of exultation—"the lovely pilgrim is in our power, whom we so long sought in vain through yon gloomy vaults and subterraneous passages.—You are welcome, fair lady: Father Hilarius gave us notice, that we might expect your visit; and I rejoice to find, that the description which he gave us of your charms, was far from exaggerated."—

—"Have mercy on my distress, Sir Knight!" cried Ida, who now rose from her seat with difficulty, and sank at his feet, while she extended her fettered hands in supplication towards him.

—"Father Hilarius assured me," she continued, "that I should find the habitation

tation of someholy Hermits near the cavern's mouth : oh ! if any such habitation really exists, in pity guide me thither !"—

—"Compose yourself, lovely girl," answered the stranger.—"Hilarius has not deceived you, neither has he deceived *us*.—He promised us the possession of a treasure, and he has kept his word, though we mean to make a better use of it than that, for which he consigned it over to us. He promised *you*, that you should find here the habitation of certain Hermits ; and he told you true, for you are actually in a Hermitage at this moment : many years ago was this the retreat of some fugitive Monks, who were obliged to seclude themselves from the intercourse of mankind ; and it still forms an abode

for a band of daring and persecuted spirits, whom tyranny and injustice have banished from the world. We too are Hermits, though not quite such holy ones as those, whom you expected to meet. But what does that signify? saints, or sinners, I warrant, you will fare better in our society, than you would with any company of Monks, that ever concealed hypocrisy under sackcloth.—Take this as a specimen of the whole canting-tribe. Father Hilarius has commissioned us to remove you so far from this province, that your face may never be seen here again: we have engaged to convey you to a place, where beauty like yours is always a marketable commodity, and sure of fetching a heavy price: but you are too fair, too good, too noble, to be sacrificed

sacrificed to the embraces of an infidel : no, child ! we mean to do better for you. You shall remain with *us*, and your priestly enemy shall be foiled in his treacherous designs.”—

—“ First understand,” interrupted Ida, whose indignation in spite of grief and terror burst forth upon hearing this insolent declaration of the outlaw ; “ first understand, to *whom* you speak ! I am no ordinary captive, no low-born girl the fit associate for a band of robbers !—you see in me the niece of Count Frederick of Torrenburg !”—

—“ Indeed ?” replied the outlaw,—“ are you then *really* Count Frederick’s niece ?—why, to let you into the whole secret, we were told as much, though we did not give the Monk full credit, and suspected *that* part of his story to

be an invention for the purpose of obtaining a better price.—But since you are in truth the person whom he mentioned, so much the better; your rank and expectations make your possession doubly valuable. I have no sort of objection to exchange my precarious mode of life for security and opulence, nor by laying aside the title of captain of a band of outlaws to claim that of Count of Torrenburg in right of my wife, its lovely heiress. With the assistance of my companions I will reinstate you in your rights; the previous possession of your hand and person will entitle me to share your good fortune; and I shall be indebted to you for my restoration to my proper rank in society, which necessity has for some time past compelled me unwillingly to resign.

resign. Now then you are apprized of my whole plan, which suggested itself as soon as Hilarius informed us of your rank, and in which I am fully confirmed by the powerful impression produced upon my heart by your beauty.”—

He paused : Ida only answered with her tears—after a few minutes past in expectation of her reply, the robber thus resumed his discourse.

—“ You are silent ? you weep ?—
Ha ! perhaps you are offended that your hands are fettered ?—be comforted ; those white hands shall instantly be restored to liberty !—instantly undo those bonds, barbarians that you are ! how could it come into your heads, that it was necessary to bind a poor defenceless girl, whose escape is so impossible ?—shame upon your flinty hearts, how

could you bear to treat so inhumanly such innocence and such charms!"—

The other robbers now hurried to remove the fetters; but their captain drove them away with curses, and declared, that from that moment no one except himself should dare to approach his lovely captive on pain of instantaneous death.—He then kissed the unbound hands of Ida, led her respectfully into another tent, and there left her alone, after entreating her to compose her agitated spirits, and assuring her, that she might rely upon meeting from him with none but the most honourable treatment.

Ida, equally overcome with mental and bodily fatigue, sank into a state of unconsciousness and stupor, which the sentinels who were appointed to guard
1 the

the entrance of her tent (and who from time to time looked in upon their charge) interpreted to be a tranquil sleep, and failed not to bring this welcome intelligence to their captain.— He received it with the highest satisfaction, hailed this refreshing slumber as the first step towards the restoration of tranquillity, doubted not that he should find Ida more composed and resigned to her fate on his evening visit, and found her almost frantic through despair.

The peremptory manner in which Ida rejected his addresses, and the little progress which he made in reconciling her to her present situation, grieved the robber-chief to the very heart, but did not excite his indignation. He continued to treat her with the utmost
G 6 respect

respect and attention. Nothing was denied her except liberty ; and Randolph (for that was the name of the enamoured outlaw) carried his politeness and deference so far, that he never even presumed to enter her tent without having previously obtained her permission.

Ida, whose presence of mind gradually returned, and who became collected enough to reflect on the best means of conducting herself in such difficult circumstances, could not but feel, that such attention on the part of Randolph required some return on hers. She was totally in his power ; it was unwise to exasperate him ; and she therefore judged it prudent to allow him permission to pay her a daily visit of an hour, since she feared with reason, that with-

out

out this voluntary concession he might be induced to allow himself greater liberties without asking her leave.

—“ May I, lady,” said he one morning, after she had past some days in his power ; “ may I request permission to present to you one of my friends, who holds in this society the next place to myself?—he is a nobleman, whom misfortunes have compelled like me to adopt a mode of life, which we both look upon with abhorrence, and which with the first opportunity we are determined to exchange for one more honourable.”—

Ida was sufficiently aware, that the *opportunity* to which he alluded, was the possession of her hand, by which he hoped to give himself a claim to the Count of Torrenburg’s rich inheritance

tance. He frequently in conversation threw out hints of this nature, but which she judged it most wise to let pass without observation. She now only answered that part of his speech, which regarded the introduction of his friend, and to which (as she feared to irritate her jailor by a refusal) she gave an unwilling consent.

On his next visit he was accompanied by a man, whose countenance was much more wild and his manners much less prepossessing, than those of Randolph. The latter presented the new visitor by the name of Sir Gero of Altheim.

The captive soon understood from the conversation, which past between the associates, that the antipathy, which Gero's first appearance had excited in
her

her bosom, had not been excited without good grounds. He possessed not the smallest share of that delicacy and respectful attention, by which her lover was characterized. He permitted himself to make the most licentious and offensive observations upon the extraordinary charms of her person, and raised her original disgust to abhorrence by blaming Randolph for having suffered his passion to remain so long ungratified; assuring him at the same time, that he would have dealt far differently with his own lovely mistress, had not her religious habit terrified him from using force; and thereby drawing down the vengeance of offended Heaven.—For it seems, this wretch, though he trampled upon all laws human and divine, was still a slave to the grossest superstition,

superstition, and trembled at the very sight of a veil or a rosary.

—“ She has now been some days in your possession,” observed Randolph; “ have you made any progress with the fair Nun ?” —

“ Not I !” replied Gero ; “ she is a miracle of beauty, its true, but her obstinacy equals her charms. Since the day that I captured her on the road to Zurich, I have been able to obtain nothing from her but tears and entreaties for her liberty : and as to proceeding to violence, I am too much afraid of the resentment of holy mother church, or I should put an end to her resistance before to-morrow morning.” —

During this conversation Ida remained silent, and abandoned herself to the melancholy reflections excited by the increased

increased consciousness of the execrable society, of which she was so unfortunately become a member. But now when she found that she had a companion in misfortune, and that a person of her own sex (a virtuous and persecuted Nun) was so near her, a sentiment of secret satisfaction and hope infused itself into her bosom.

—“ Oh ! Sir Knight,” she exclaimed, addressing herself to Randolph, “ how happy would you make me, could you but procure for me the company of Sir Gero’s captive ! it is disgraceful, it is dreadful, for a young maiden to be alone in a society entirely composed of men and strangers ; and I feel, that the presence of a person of my own sex would be to me a source of the greatest consolation ! it would conduce beyond all else
to

to make me endure my confinement with resignation! oh! good Sir Randolph, plead for me with your friend, and persuade him to allow me this unexpected pleasure!"—

The smile, with which she accompanied this request ('twas the first which played upon her lips, since she became a captive) was irresistible. As she pronounced the last word, she extended her hand towards him, and he kissed it with rapture. A wish, expressed in a manner so fascinating and so unlooked for, was a law to the enamoured robber; and addressing himself immediately to his companion, he enforced her request with so much energy, that Gero though with a sorry grace found himself compelled to grant it.

—"Now then" said Randolph, as he
left

left the tent with Gero," now then you can judge for yourself, which of our modes of treating our captives is the most likely to succeed at the long run. When did your Nun ever speak to you with such gentleness, or favour you with so sweet a smile? when did she ever extend her hand towards you of her own accord, and suffer you to press your lips upon it? credit me, Gero; send her to my mistress, and I will bet my head upon it, that before long half her obstinacy and aversion will have disappeared. You see, how complaisant I have made the lady Ida; and it only requires a little kindness and flattery well applied to make our religious ladies, just as tame and as obliging as their sisters of the wicked world."—

In the course of the day Randolph
returned

returned to inform Ida, that she must not expect the visit of the captive Nun till after midnight.

—“ My friend,” said he, “ is obliged to keep it a profound secret from the greatest part of our companions, that such a prisoner is in his possession. That he has a mistress, indeed, they are aware ; but it would make a terrible uproar in our community, were it known that Gero had carried off a Nun ; and many among our associates ; who would think nothing of half a dozen murders, would expect the rocks to fall and crush us the very next moment, for daring to lay sacrilegious hands upon a damsel dedicated to Heaven. To be sure, we violated no sanctuary to get at her, for we found her trotting along the high road, when she ought to have

have been quiet within the walls of her Convent : but still the very sight of a veil has such influence over the common rabble, that Gero does not think it prudent to bring her to your tent except under the protecting shadow of night. He also implores you by me to reward him for this compliance with your wishes, by persuading her to lend a more favourable ear to his passion : he is also desirous of learning her name, which hitherto she has obstinately concealed ; and above all he is anxious, that she should lay aside her religious habit, which hourly exposes him to danger from his superstitious associates. I know, what you are going to observe : you believe, that it is nothing but respect for this habit, which preserves her from Gero's violence ; but I swear to
you

you by everything that is most sacred and solemn, that neither she nor yourself have anything to fear from the men who adore you. Our intentions towards you are the most honourable: we have great designs in hand, whose nature I am not as yet permitted to disclose to you; but be assured, that should they succeed, the Countess of Werdenberg and the fair Nun will have reason to bless the day when they fell into our hands, and thus escaped the being immured for life within the gloomy walls of a Convent; a fate, from which *she* has been rescued, and to which *you* were doomed.”—

The prudent Ida, (who saw that favours, which had cost her so little, were so well rewarded by her grateful admirer) took good care not to contradict

tradict the robber. She answered him by a thousand thanks for his intercession with Gero, and for his assurances of regard for her welfare ; and she then dismissed him with a smile so gracious and so sweet, as riveted his chains for ever. When beauty, and sense are united in the same woman, alas ! what puppets in her hands are the mighty lords of the creation !

Midnight arrived—the hearts of both the captives throbbed with impatience for the moment of meeting, though they knew not, what made them so impatient. Never seemed time to move so slowly with Ida, as while she waited for the stranger's arrival ; and on her side the lovely Nun quite trembled with joy, while she followed her conductors to the tent, in which (so Gero had

had

had informed her,) she should find a companion in captivity, whose heart was prepared to sympathize in her misfortunes—the robbers conducted her to the door of the tent; but thinking it would be most agreeable to the ladies, that their first interview should pass without intruders, they suffered her to enter alone.

It was well for both the captives, that this meeting took place without witnesses.—Ida was sitting in a melancholy posture, when she heard an approaching footstep.—She started up, and beheld by the pale gleams of her lamp a tall light figure, whose face was covered with a thick veil, advancing from the entrance of the tent. She hastened to meet her, but uttering a loud cry, she started back again. The
religious

religious habit worn by the stranger was but too well known to her.—It was the long grey garment decorated with a golden cross upon the breast, in which she had so often seen the Nuns gliding through the cloisters of Engelberg; and the white veil, edged with black and falling to the very ground, was of that particular form appropriated to the order of the Zurich Sisters. The veil was now hastily thrown back; Ida gazed eagerly upon the Stranger's features, and astonishment, joy, and tenderness were carried to the highest pitch.

—“Constantia!” exclaimed Ida.—

“Oh! Heaven! it is my Constantia!”—

—“Ida! my Ida!” shrieked the Nun, and clasped her almost fainting sister to her bosom.

And now the Sisters wept for joy to think, that they were once more united ; and now they wept for grief at reflecting, that this union had only made each a partner in the other's captivity. At length having sufficiently collected their scattered thoughts, they made mutual enquiries as to the events, which had produced a meeting so unexpected. Ida related the long and fearful tale of adventures, which had so rapidly crowded upon her since Elizabeth's wedding : on the other hand, Constantia briefly stated, that on her way back to her Convent at Zurich, her party had been encountered by a band of robbers: the Cloister-Vassals, whom the Abbess had sent to protect her, were soon put to flight ; and thus was she brought into the hands of Gero, whom

whom she had the misfortune to inspire with so violent a passion, that he purchased her from his companions with his share of the booty arising from the whole produce of their excursion.

The night past away in mutual congratulations on this meeting so unexpected ; and when morning broke, they recollected, that their plans for the future were still unarranged. They had now only time to settle, that as the knowledge of Ida's rank had only served to make the robbers consider her possession as of double value, it would be most prudent to conceal Constantia's real title ; and accordingly she resolved to resume her former appellation of Mary Tell, an appellation under which she had past the only happy part of her existence.

When Randolph the next morning inquired of Ida, what she thought of the fair Nun, she replied, that her society was extremely pleasing, and would be much more so, were it not for a certain coldness and reserve, which probably would wear off upon further acquaintance. In a few days she informed Gero, that she had discovered the name of his mistress to be Mary Tell; and thus did Constantia avoid the dangerous importance attached to the title of a Countess of Werdenberg. By her sister's advice, she abated somewhat of the haughty coldness, with which she had hitherto repress the addresses of her ferocious lover; though they both judged it unwise for her to comply with his request, that she should lay aside her religious habit. This had hitherto been
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the means of protecting her, against more violent means of enforcing his passion ; and they were of opinion, that too many restraints could not well be imposed upon an affection so ill-regulated as the sentiment, which Gero dignified with the name of love. However, gentle looks and expressions of gratitude for his attentions were not occasionally refused by Constantia : Gero had been so little accustomed to be thus mildly treated by her, that even these trifling condescensions appeared to him of inestimable value ; and when in return for his assurances of future respect, she one day deigned to extend towards him her alabaster hand, the robber was so transported, that he took the first opportunity of thanking Ida upon his knees for a change, which he attri-

buted entirely to her powerful influence, and which he implored her to exert still further in his behalf.

—“Noble lady,” said he, “you have often heard Randolph hint, that we have great plans in agitation, whose chief object is the promotion of your interests; nor are they unconnected with the happiness of myself and my adorable Nun. A dreadful oath forbids my saying more on this subject at present; but rest assured, when the time for explanation arrives, that explanation will be such, as must perforce content you. In the mean while suffer me to make to you one request. It is necessary for the success of our undertaking, that yourself and the lovely Mary (together with our jewels, gold, and all things which we possess of value) should be removed
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from this valley to a retreat at some distance. During the journey, and your residence at this new abode, promise me, that you will keep a watchful eye over your fair companion, on whose attachment I can by no means rely with the same confidence, which Randolph places on yours. In this respect, he is far more fortunate than his friend; since the kind reception, which he never fails to meet from you, in spite of the awe with which your modest air and dignified demeanour inspires him, leaves but little doubt, that you are sensible of his worth, and will in time be disposed to reward so steady an attachment. Besides this, I am convinced, that you have too much solid understanding to think of escaping from a place, whose very nature will convince

you on your arrival, that any such attempt must be unsuccessful : but no one can say, what dangerous impossibilities a Nun may not be induced to undertake, animated by religious enthusiasm, and confident in the supposed protection of the Saint, to whom her service is dedicated. These illusions may heat her brain, till she desperately braves every peril, overlooks every difficulty, and will draw down inevitable ruin on her own existence, while she leaves me to lament over my baffled hopes. Then mark me, Lady !—watch over Mary's steps with unceasing assiduity : when we again meet, restore her to me safe and lovely, as I now leave her ; or never hope to see yourself reinstated in your claims by the valour of my arms and those of my companions,

ons, nor restored to society by the acknowledged title of Countess of Werdenberg, and heiress of the wide domains of Torrenburg, Carlsheim, and Sargans."—

This speech, which was begun in a kneeling posture and in the softest tone, which a voice so naturally rough could adopt, assumed as it proceeded an air of menace, and was terminated by Gero with a terrible frown and a loud stroke upon the brazen pommel of his sword. Nearly the same discourse was repeated to her in the evening, (though conveyed in much milder language) by Randolph. She delivered such a reply, as circumstances compelled her to give, and trembled, as she listened to some obscure hints and disjointed observations, which fell from the outlaw, but which no soli-

citations could induce him to explain. However, she had heard enough to excite in her mind the most painful apprehensions, though not enough to certify their being well-grounded.

The preparations for setting out were soon completed: the treasures were packed up; and the Sisters were now informed, that the place of their destination was a narrow valley situated in the heart of the Mountains of Hapsburg. Gero and Randolph took a tender but respectful leave of the fair travellers, who were escorted by a small band of soldiers, composed of such members of this lawless society as were unfitted by advanced years for taking part in that great undertaking, to assist in which, the young and active were detained. The ladies set forward, but not till Ida had

had made some observations, which rendered her doubly impatient to commence her journey.

—“ Oh! my sister,” she said, as soon as she found an opportunity of conversing without being overheard, “ did you not observe among Randolph’s followers countenances, which you had seen before? In spite of their change of dress, I am certain, that the two who rode next to Gero were Friars, who often visited the Castle of Torrenburg.”—

—“ Alas!” answered Constantia, “ it is not now, that I learn for the first time, that a perfect understanding subsists between these robbers and the unworthy members of some religious community. During my confinement in Gero’s tent I frequently observed monks among

his visitors ; of whose principles you will judge, when I inform you, that they made no scruple to counsel my encouraging the licentious addresses of my jailor, though they were thoroughly persuaded, that I was a dedicated Nun : they offered to release me from my vows, laughed at (what they termed) the absurdity of my prejudices, promised me entire absolution, and advised me to pay no more respect to my veil, than they did to their cowls and scapularies. Conceive, dear Ida, my sufferings, while compelled to listen to such profane suggestions, and to repress the indignation, which they excited in my bosom.”—

—“ And have you then no guess,” demanded Ida, “ what is the object of an union so singular ?—Did they never
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let fall a syllable, whence you could collect the nature of this mysterious enterprize, on which they are now departed?"—

Constantia declared her perfect ignorance on the subject.

—"Alas! alas!" resumed Ida, "dreadful apprehensions force themselves upon my mind! Randolph frequently suffered hints to escape him, which the more that I reflect on them, serve but to confirm my fears the more. The robbers have a private understanding with the false Hilarius.—The Monks, whom I discovered in Randolph's train, are of the same order with that betrayer!—Its true, Count Frederick has treated me cruelly and unjustly, and now little merits, that I should feel anxiety on his account. Yet, oh! that I were but

near

near him for one half hour, that I might warn him of the dangers, which hang over him and his, and which I would willingly avert, though the price were the last drop of my blood and the last breath of my existence.”—

The Sisters had full leisure in the wild solitude to which they were conveyed, to communicate to each other their mutual fears and melancholy forebodings. Ida’s insinuating manners soon rendered her a favourite with her grey-headed guards; and the persuasion of Constantia’s religious vocation made them bow with superstitious reverence at her approach, and hold it an honour to be suffered to kiss the hem of her sanctified garment. In consequence of these prepossessions in their favour, the Sisters had no other reason to complain

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of their treatment in confinement, except the confinement itself.

The place, in which they now resided, was inaccessible to all, except the robbers, and the rays of the sun. It was a flat spot surrounded by a chain of snow-covered mountains; one narrow footpath hewn in the rock was the only entrance, whose windings were known to none except the ferocious inhabitants of this valley; and which the sudden descent of weights of snow and of ice-splinters* from the over-hanging rocks frequently rendered for some time impracticable even for them. The Sisters shuddered, as they gazed upon the gigantic masses of rocks of ice, which glittered coldly around them as far as the eye could reach; and they could not conceal their terrors at reflecting, that a single motion

* Avalanches.

motion of those cloud-covered summits would be sufficient to convert the valley into their inevitable grave. The chief of their guards, however, upon hearing them make this remark, assured them, that this never *would* happen, because it never *had* happened yet.

—“ You must know, fair ladies,” said he, “ that I am one of the most antient among the heroes, who have the honour to serve under the banners of Sir Randolf of Mansfeld. While I was but a child, I fled hither with my poor father, then the innocent victim of monkish persecution, and we found a kind refuge in the bosom of these mountains. The man, who was then at the head of this hospitable community, had been acquainted with the first institutor of the band, and had learned
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from him many remarkable particulars respecting this valley ; some of them in good truth enough to curdle the young blood in your veins with very terror : but as to such an accident as that which you apprehend, never had such a thing been known to happen. Therefore set your hearts at rest, ladies : the valley lasted out *his* time ; you see, it has almost lasted out *mine*, and I warrant you, it will last out yours also.”—

The Sisters had no better means of passing the tedious hours of captivity than in listening to the old robber’s never-ending narratives : besides, they thought it by no means impossible, that in the warmth of discourse some particulars might escape him, which might tend to the improvement of their own situation. They therefore often entreated

treated him to relate the adventures of his father, who had been so unjustly persecuted ; as also to tell them, what he had learnt, from his first captain, respecting the original founder of this society of freebooters, and to give them some account of the various singularities of the mountains. 'They could not be better pleased to listen, than the old man was to talk ; and he answered these inquiries at much greater length, than I shall repeat at present : with his persecuted father we have no occasion for concerning ourselves ; and as to the wonders of the mountains, we are likely to obtain a more particular description of them from another quarter : the only point then, which need be repeated for the gratification of the curious, is the manner, in which the habitation of holy

Anchorets

Anchorets became converted into a retreat for banditti.

Whoever is acquainted with the antient history of Sargans, cannot but remember, that these private recesses of the mountains were inhabited by a society of fugitive Monks from Cloister Curwald. The institution of this society took place in the time of Count Ethelbert of Carlsheim; and it was continued by the occasional reception of new members, as often as death reduced the number, to which it had been limited by its founder, Abbot Christian. That number was six; but for want of novices it was reduced to two, at the period, when Luprian, the licentious Abbot of Cloister-Curwald, (flying from the vengeance of Count Herman of Werdenberg, and from the punishment due

due to his inhuman treatment of the Lady Emmeline) was conducted by chance to this secluded Hermitage.

The pious Anchorets received him with the most benevolent welcome: they gave full credit to his tale of persecuted innocence, and looked upon the virtuous sufferer as an angel conducted thither by the hand of Heaven, that he might comfort and sustain them under the infirmities of age, and might close their eyes, when death should draw nigh their stony couches. This last piece of service Luprian lost no time in rendering them. He imagined, that they possest concealed treasures of immense value, which would enable him to lead once more a life of luxury in some foreign country, could he but obtain the inheritance of his hosts. In

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consequence of this persuasion, the old hermits slept in the grave sooner, than nature had intended; and Luprian without an hour's delay ransacked every corner of the cave. His expectations were cruelly disappointed. He found nothing more than the usual possessions of an Anchorite; cowls, scapularies, crosses, and a few relics of saints and martyrs. But of gold or jewels there appeared not the slightest vestige; and Luprian had the mortification to find, that he had committed one of the most horrible crimes ever perpetrated on earth, without deriving from it even the most insignificant advantage.

Yet was it not its guilt, which made him lament the commission of this action; no, 'twas its having been committed without reward. His conscience

science was by no means of so delicate a texture, as to make him feel uncomfortable, while inhabiting the scene of this atrocious murder. On the contrary, he resolved on making this well-concealed retreat the theatre of fresh offences, and immediately employed himself in collecting a set of men, whose hearts were depraved, whose characters were blasted, and whose prospects in the world were ruined like his own. These he conducted to the mountain-valley, and became the founder of a band of free-booters, which had now existed above a hundred years, and which had brought inexpressible calamity on all the neighbouring country. The rich and the poor, the nobleman and the peasant, alike mourned over their ravaged fields, and plundered dwellings,

dwellings, their murdered children and dishonoured wives; and yet did the authors of all this mischief set punishment at defiance, protected by their secret caverns and their snow-clad impracticable rocks.

Their numbers had gradually increased. Hither fled for refuge many a ruined nobleman, no longer able by honest means to supply his pampered appetites with those indulgencies, which habit had now made absolutely necessary: many a fugitive Monk, who dreaded the chastisement so justly due to his violated vows: many a blood-guilty culprit, to whom the world offered no happier prospect than the gibbet or the rack: and alas! many an innocent sufferer, driven by the persecution of the powerful or by the bann of the church to

this wild society, in whose polluted bosom he for the first time became acquainted with guilt. The numbers of these banditti now considerably exceeded a thousand, all of whom acknowledged as their chiefs Randolph and Gero.

Besides the above information, the old robber communicated to his fair questioner many particulars respecting the neighbouring mountains, every succeeding one of which was more wonderful and terrific than its predecessor. The Sisters believed no more of these extraordinary tales than they thought proper: however, they obtained much more credit with the one, than with the other. Ida's solitary wanderings through the subterraneous caverns of her uncle's castle had given her a degree
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of confidence in danger, which before was totally wanting in her character : and the experience which she had thus acquired, in addition to her natural high spirits and enthusiastic imagination, converted her from being the most timid of created beings into a kind of demi-heroine, ready for adventures, and disposed to set all perils at defiance.

—“ All things well considered,” said she to her sister, as they sat one star-light night before the door of their cavern, round which their guards lay sleeping; “ all things well considered, I am convinced, that flight is absolutely necessary, and by no means unlikely to be attended with success. Whether Randolph and Gero prosper in their plans, or fail, their return will equally bring with it our certain ruin. Then before

that dreaded return takes place, let us summon up our resolution, and seize the first favourable opportunity to explore the way through yonder chain of mountains, which old Hugo has described to us in such terrible colours. The way, by which I fled from the Castle of Sargans, was not without its horrors: yet I soon grew accustomed to them; and how far inferior were they to those, which I had heard attributed to the caverns, and which I believed to be real, till experience convinced me of my error! Oh, be assured, Constantia! we shall find, that a similar deception has been used in the present case. Yonder mountains, I am persuaded, are not entirely covered with ice and snow; between them may be found, no doubt, many a green and sheltered

sheltered valley, where we may rest occasionally, and recover strength sufficient to endure and to conquer the dangers and difficulties of the way, which still remains to be traversed. Who knows, but their lofty heads conceal from us some happy smiling regions, where we may pass the rest of our lives unknown and unnoticed in innocence and peace, and may become once more as happy, as we were in the morning of our youth on the banks of the Lake of Thun and in the green vallies of Frutiger?—Dearest Constantia, be resolute, and let us hazard the attempt! For the worse, our situation cannot change: we can lose nothing, even should we fail; we may gain every thing, if we succeed: even at the worst, the attempt however unprosperous must obtain for

us *one* advantage, a release from captivity by death without dishonour.”—

In answer to these representations, Constantia reminded her sister of the fearful traditions, which Hugo had related to them, respecting the mountains, and the fantastic beings supposed to inhabit them. She pointed to the Halsberg Rock, whose steep and lofty head rose exactly opposite to them, glittering through the gloom of night like an immense star ; and she inquired of Ida, to what cause she attributed this extraordinary splendour ? Was it by any means improbable (she asked) that these inaccessible heights were appropriated to the residence of evil spirits ; who by night endured there the punishment due to their crimes in sulphureous fires, of which that light was
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the reflection ; and who by day employed themselves in leading astray such unwary travellers, as ventured too near the place of their mysterious torments, and in hurling them down frightful precipices into depths and abysses, never to rise again ?

Ida replied, that it was by no means her intention to travel into the clouds so far as the place, whose dazzling brightness had induced her sister to people it with such terrific inhabitants : and she added, that being determined on flight, she was better pleased to believe, that the brightness itself, which seemed like a crown of diamonds encircling the brows of the venerable Halsburg and his brethren, proceeded merely from the reflection of the moon and stars on the ice-covered cliffs and crags,

than from brimstone and sulphur burning in a terrestrial Hell.

Constantia's long abode in a convent and her visionary turn of mind, made it difficult for Ida to get the better of these superstitious terrors: yet at length she succeeded. They began to make the necessary preparations for their attempt. They lost no opportunity of secreting such provisions, as were not of a very perishable nature and were easy of conveyance; they also endeavoured to accustom themselves to taking but little sustenance in the course of the day; and they soon flattered themselves, that whatever might otherwise be the dangers of their expedition, they were at least secure against suffering from the attacks of those two most cruel enemies of poor pilgrims, hunger and thirst.

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As to pretences for absenting themselves from the valley, they were easily to be found. The robbers were too thoroughly persuaded, that flight was impossible, and too strongly imprest with the idea, that women were too great cowards to hazard such an attempt, for them to keep any very strict watch over their prisoners.

Constantia was particularly dexterous in laying springes for snipes, woodcocks, and other birds, which frequented these rocks in great numbers; and the light-footed Ida would often explore places in search of their eggs, where the chamois himself would scarcely have ventured to climb. Then when the Sisters were successful, they knew so well how to prepare their booty for the table in a manner the best calculated to

please the palate, that even old Hugo did not think it beneath him to accept a part of the savoury repast. Sometimes, the eagerness of this pursuit prevented the girls from perceiving the flight of time ; and night was already closing in, before they regained the cavern. However, as they seldom returned with empty hands, and as they always did return at last, these long excursions were seldom found fault with.—One of the robbers indeed thought proper in a moment of ill-humour to remonstrate with Hugo on the too great liberty allowed the captives, and to represent the possibility of their seizing the opportunity to escape ; but the old man was faithful also on this occasion to the opinion, which he had formerly given respecting the fall of
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the ice-crag; and continued to content himself with thinking,—“ that which never had happened, in all probability never would happen at all;” indeed this was on all occasions a favourite maxim with him: and he frequently averred, that his adhering to it through life had saved his head many an unnecessary care, and his limbs many an unnecessary journey.

In the course of these excursions, the Sisters had examined the lower part of most of the mountains towards the north. They agreed, that a particular path, which seemed to lead straight over the Halsberg Rock, appeared to offer the most convenient passage and the greatest prospect of a successful end to their journey. By this path then they determined to set forward,

as soon as they could summon up resolution sufficient to enter upon so dangerous an undertaking; but this was no easy matter, and they still thought it better with every succeeding day to postpone their journey to the next.

In the mean while, it appeared that Gero and Randolph had not found their plans so easy of execution, as they had flattered themselves would have been the case. This was evident from their thinking it necessary to send for the greatest part of those of their associates, who had been appointed to watch over the captives and treasures concealed in the secret valley; and who, being chiefly men, whose strength was considerably impaired by age or wounds, could only be required to give assistance in some case of most urgent necessity. This unexpected.

unexpected demand for their services produced much disturbance among the grey-headed miscreants. The Sisters thought this a favourable opportunity for putting their design in execution. Their preparations were already completed: each took a basket well-filled with wine and provisions in her left hand, and grasped with her right a strong and knotted staff to support her tottering feet, as she traversed the slippery paths of the mountains: and then with hearts beating anxiously, and with cheeks, almost as pale as the snow-hills to which their steps were addrest, they set forward to pursue a path till then never trodden by the foot of mortal.

Each was persuaded, that she was thoroughly acquainted with the nature of these mountains, because they had

examined the two or three first miles of them. They dreamed of green vales and silvery fountains, because they had occasionally found such among the lower parts of the Halsberg Rock. But how bitter were their sensations, when they perceived, that with every moment the path became more rough and difficult; when they found, that their endeavours to keep on the same level were in vain, and that they were compelled to ascend into the more bleak and lofty regions of the mountain! at length they stopped in despair: they exchanged looks of terror, and murmured a few broken words, respecting the hopelessness of their attempt and the necessity of returning. They embraced each other with a sigh of anguish, and then began to retrace their way

way to the robber's valley ; for even this now appeared to them an object less terrible, than certain death in this kingdom of frost and desolation. However, they had not proceeded far, before they discovered, that (miserable as it was) even this last resource was denied to them. It was evident, that they had missed their way ; to which ever side their course was directed, they still found themselves compelled to ascend. It seemed, as if they were inclosed in some magician's circle, from whence there was no escaping ; or as if incensed at their invasion of his territories, the spirit of the mountain had so fascinated their eyes, that they could only see the paths which led upwards to his cloudy palace, but none which by descending into the vale would enable them to escape from his vengeance.

As yet they had not felt themselves quite solitary in these realms of terror. Sometimes a chamois bounded by them ; sometimes their footsteps, echoing from the frozen rock, scared from its nest a screaming eagle : but still the further that they advanced, the more silent and awful seemed all around them ; and the greater that the number became of those gigantic masses of ice, which they left behind, the greater number still were seen towering before them in the distance. Here all animation seemed to end : here the stillness of death appeared to have fixed its everlasting dwelling. No solitary weed, no single blade of grass showed itself from between the frozen rifts. Only here and there appeared some scanty patches of moss, and of another plant without colour, taste, or smell ; thin, frail and white as
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the snow, from which it was produced.

Constantia paused for a moment : she prest her sister's hand, and silent tears streamed down her cheeks, while she pointed to a pair of milk-white butterflies ; the only living creatures to be seen in this melancholy place, and perhaps the last, which *they* should ever see. It was clear, that not their own sport or inclination had brought the insects thither, but that some unlucky gust of wind had forced them into these inhospitable desarts. The poor little flutterers flew round each other for a while in still contracting-circles, and then sank on the ground, overpowered by the killing wind which blew from the Ice-hills. The Sisters gazed upon them with looks of compassionate

anguish; in the fate of these two unfortunate wanderers they read their own. Their feet were already seized by the frost; it would have been impossible for them to have proceeded much further, had not a better path presented itself before them. This, it is true, was free from ice and snow; but on the other hand it was much more difficult and rough, on account of immense masses of fallen rock, which occasionally barred up the path completely. Over these they were obliged to climb, not without danger; neither did they suffer themselves to be scared from proceeding by the precipices, which frequently yawned on both sides of them, and threatened the poor Pilgrims with death in their abysses. But oh! how amply were they repaid
for

for all which they had suffered in traversing this path, when they perceived some narrow planks laid from one of those precipices to another. Here then were certain proofs, that human beings had past this way before them; had performed the journey with success; and had left these memorials to assure any wanderers who might follow them, that it was not impossible for patience and perseverance to overcome the obstacles, which opposed their painful progress. Now then the Sisters hastened onwards with fresh spirits and recruited hopes. Alas! it was not long, before each separately perceived skulls, and other fragments of human skeletons, which told them but too plainly, how vain was the attempt of escaping from these rocks with life! each knew but too well

well the object which shocked her ; each felt but too plainly the truth, which the sight of that object conveyed : but neither told what she had seen to the other, lest she should make her sister's bosom share the anguish of her own.

Thus did the poor weary girls continue to wander onwards, till day-light faded ; the increasing gloom made the surrounding objects appear doubly terrific. At length the moon rose. Ida and Constantia were passionate admirers of the charms of nature : it is true, that their hearts were too full of anxiety, and their limbs too much tortured by the severity of the frost, to admit of their feeling in its whole strength of beauty the admirable scene, which the moon-beams now exhibited to their view :

view : yet was not that beauty entirely disregarded by them. Each called her sister's attention to the dazzling and indescribable splendour, which now unexpectedly surrounded them : each, in hopes of imparting a gleam of momentary satisfaction to the other, exaggerated her admiration at the pompous show, and forced an expression of pleasure into her countenance, which was totally foreign to her heart. The moon rose still higher ; her image was reflected a thousand-fold from the enormous crystallizations, which presented themselves on all sides, hanging from the broken crags, and threatening every moment to fall into the profound gulphs beneath them. The objects around seemed on a sudden like some region described in romance, where
diamond.

diamond-rocks and palaces of precious stones are raised in an instant in a wild desert by the wand of some arch-magician : everything appeared enchanted, and the Sisters, as they now hastened onwards, seemed wandering in a flood of silver light : but alas ! that light was cheerless and unwarming. It only enabled them to contemplate the regions of frost around them, but gave them no relief from the pain, which that frost inflicted ! with a sentiment of sorrow not to be exprest, they folded each other in a strict embrace.

—“ All around us is so bright and fair !” said Ida ; “ alas ! and *we* are so wretched !” —

Constantia only answered her with tears — yet after remaining for a few moments in this attitude of tender sorrow, they
were

were sensible, that a kind of cheering warmth had communicated itself from each bosom to the other. Yet Constantia now declared, that she found it impossible for her to proceed onwards : but if any place could be found, not so totally frozen as to threaten any one, who should rest there, with the sleep of death, she trusted, that after a short repose she should be able to resume her journey with recruited strength and spirits. They had fancied for some time, that they could distinguish the distant murmur of a stream of water ; and they now naturally concluded, that a place, where water was still unfettered enough to flow, could not be altogether destitute of warmth.

Ida encouraged her fainting sister to drag herself a few paces further, in
hopes

hopes of discovering that place of rest, which she had just declared so necessary.

They ventured to enter one of the enormous caverns, which the penetrating moon-beams deprived of some part of its natural terrors. As they proceeded, they were sensible of a different temperature of air from that, which they breathed in the more exposed parts of the mountain : by comparison they could almost call the sensation, which they now experienced, by the pleasing name of warmth ; and the feel of something like soft moss under their feet encouraged them with the conviction, that here at least all vegetation was not completely at an end. The roar of the water-fall by this time was almost deafening ; but no persuasions could

could induce the timid Constantia to advance one step further into the cavern, than where it was illuminated by the moon-beams.

She sank almost insensible upon the mossy carpet ; while the more active Ida bethought herself of every possible means of alleviating the sufferings of her fellow-Pilgrim. The contents of their baskets remained untouched, for anxiety of heart had prevented them hitherto from being sensible either of thirst, or hunger. Ida now bathed her sister's pale lips with some drops of wine ; she then splintered the staves, which had guided their tottering steps in this hazardous journey ; and she hastened to collect a few precious fragments of broken wood, which while entering the cavern she had remarked
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in the moon-shine ; probably they were the remains of a plank, which had served some former traveller as a bridge over the wide chasms between the rocks.

With a flint and the steel clasp of her girdle she contrived to strike out a few sparks of fire. It was not long, before she had the satisfaction to see the wood blazing ; and she started in admiration and astonishment at the magnificent show, which the strengthening fire-light presented before her ; the Sisters were at the entrance of an immense and vaulted cavern, whose sides and roof appeared to be entirely formed of ice : from the extreme end of it the rush of the water-fall proceeded and was repeated by innumerable echoes : while the flames played sometimes on large sheets of crystal, smooth, bright, and

and polished as Venetian mirrors, and sometimes fell upon the broken crags of the rock, whence they were reflected in a thousand ways, and which they tinged with a thousand colours.

But this was not the time for amusing herself with unprofitable observation, and Ida soon recovered herself from her momentary enthusiasm. Constantia lay by the side of the little fire, still in great need of comfort and assistance; and it was long, before her sister's efforts to revive her produced the desired effect. The first favourable consequence of these endeavours was a gentle slumber, as she lay reclined upon the moss, which by this time, had acquired a slight degree of warmth; Ida seated herself close by the fire,

occupied in feeding and preserving it, and determined not to allow her eyes to close, in order that she might devote herself to watching the slumbers of her sister.

Yet the night appeared so long, that she would have found it impossible to resist her inclination to sleep, if she had not sought some more active employment. Accustomed by her adventures in the Donat-Fortress to long wanderings in caves and darkness, she resolved to beguile the tedious hours with exploring the more retired depths of the rock, and tracing to its source the water, whose distinct roar assured her, that it could be at no great distance. The kindly warmth of the fire had recruited her spirits and restored her strength

strength in a great measure ; and she found herself able to undertake the task of wandering through the frozen cavern, without being in danger of yielding to the cold. Midnight was past, when guiding her course by the light of a blazing fire-brand she drew near the thunders of the cataract, and her limbs trembled less with cold, than with expectation of the sight which she was now on the point of witnessing. Who can penetrate without emotion into the earth's interior sanctuary ? who can presume to pry into Nature's secret abodes, where the great Mother brings forth those children of her strength the mighty Floods, without feeling awe-struck by the bold and desperate undertaking ?

The blazing fire-brand was here unnecessary. An opening in the cavern's roof gave free admittance to the moonbeams, and the whole extent was brilliantly illuminated. Ida now beheld a spectacle, to which she doubted whether the whole universe could produce a rival. From the summit of a rock of ice, whose height the eye measured with difficulty, and which was entirely formed of the river's own frozen evaporations, did the rapid torrent of the Aar precipitate the whole volume of its waters headlong, till it reached an enormous mass of broken pieces of rock, the probable accumulation of ages. Here it divided itself into more than twenty lesser rivers, which sought their passage into the vale below, in a variety of directions.

—The

—The scene was most splendid, but also was most awful!—the moon-light made the foaming flood appear like a torrent of liquid silver; which produced the most singular and fantastic effects, as it rushed with rebellowing roar among the groupes of colossal rocks around it, and interrupted with the glitter of its streams, the deep gloom occasioned by their shadows. Ida looked up to the awful height, whence the torrent descended, covering her with the light sprinkling of its foam: she looked down into the fearful gulph, in which its waters were buried: she looked upon the cavern's glittering walls, covered with incrustations of innumerable shapes and colours, and upon the moving shadows, which fell from the surround-

ing gigantic rocks. The sight was too much for her ; she felt her head grow giddy ; the fire-brand dropt from her grasp, and she sank upon the ground almost insensible.

She soon recovered herself, and hastened to quit a scene, whose awful beauties were more than she could bear in the weak and agitated state of her nerves. She could discern the glimmerings of the distant fire, and hastened back to the outward cavern ; where she found Constantia still buried in repose. The flame was now getting low, and more fuel was not to be procured : but it had already warmed the cave sufficiently to remove any apprehension, lest the sleeper should be frozen. Since therefore her watching ceased to
be

be necessary, Ida no longer resisted the drowsiness, against which for some time past she had found it so difficult to contend. Besides, through the opening of their resting-place she could already discern the first faint reddening of the approaching morn; she therefore laid herself down by Constantia's side with the pleasing reflection, that the cave would soon be warmed and gladdened by the power of the sun; and that when her still-slumbering sister should open her eyes, she would not behold those gloomy appearances, which during that long sad night had produced upon herself such deep and melancholy impressions.

Ida had not long closed her weary

eye-lids, before Constantia awoke greatly refreshed. Unconscious of the manner in which her sister had past the night, she lost no time in waking her, and advising the prosecution of their journey. Ida was contented with her short repose, and obeyed the summons. Yet before they quitted the hospitable cavern, to whose shelter from the night-blast they undoubtedly were indebted for life, Ida led her sister to the place, which had appeared to her so awfully splendid when viewed at midnight; but which (she doubted not) would produce a different impression than in those moments, when her fortitude was completely subdued by anxiety of mind and lassitude of body.

The

The beams of the morning-sun now stained the waters of the Aar with crimson light : its streams, as they precipitated themselves into the vales beneath, glowed with a thousand beautiful colours. A shower of diamonds seemed to fall from the summit of the ice-rock, and the cliffs, which during the night had thrown such deep and solemn shadows around them; now were gaily arrayed in verdant moss and covered with such hardy plants, as can endure cold without inconvenience, and which generally fasten their roots in the fissures of stones and among the broken crags of mountains. The sight was at once majestic and enlivening ! the two pilgrims sank upon their knees opposite to the newly-

risen sun, and poured out the sentiments of pious enthusiasm, with which they felt their hearts overflow. Not complaints, not murmurs, not sighs proceeded from the lips of these poor forlorn-ones: no; they express their delight at this wonderful creation and their admiration of its Creator, though at that moment they were themselves struggling against calamities so desperate, as scarcely to afford them the remote possibility of a rescue. Never perhaps was a nobler sacrifice offered up by suffering humanity to the power and magnificence of the Supreme!

Yet Ida's sacrifice was the greatest, since Constantia possess a source of satisfaction in her bosom, of which her sister was not yet aware.

—“ To-day,” said she, while her countenance was brightened with smiles, at the same time detaining Ida, who (having finished her orisons,) was on the point of turning from the cave; “ to-day it is *my* turn to be the guide through our doubtful journey. Ida, I dreamt last night, that we were still wandering along the paths, which we traversed yesterday : methought, that you went foremost, and bewildered yourself in a narrow nook, where precipices on all sides impeded your further progress. I was lamenting over your distress ; when lo ! on a sudden St. Engeltruda stood before me, such as she is represented on the altar-piece in her Chapel at Engelberg. A ray of golden light detached itself from the aureol, which

blazed round her head, and guided me to a small opening in a rock, exactly resembling *that*, which caught my eye in the first moment of my entering this cavern. I past through it : a narrow winding-way descended gradually into the valley. Suddenly, as if it had been by some magic spell, we were transported into those happy plains, where we past the years of infancy, and which I shall never cease to regret our ever leaving : there we became once more Mary and Rosanna Tell, and forgot in the humble tranquillity of Rutelis the sorrows and sufferings of our lofty hateful station.”—

Ida gave way to the enthusiastic hopes of her sister, and followed her, as with difficulty she forced her way
2 through

through a narrow opening, which she had discovered at no great distance from the torrent. After springing boldly at the hazard of their lives over a few wide-yawning chasms, they reached a kind of green plain, where it was possible for them to proceed above a hundred yards without meeting any obstacle. A circumstance so new in their painful journey inspired Constantia with added confidence. She turned smiling to her sister, and pointed out two small white butterflies, who were sporting in the sunshine, and which (she was firmly persuaded) were the very same, whom she had seen sinking exhausted to the ground on the day before.

—“Yesterday,” said she with exultation,

tation, “ yesterday they were the emblems of our distress ; to-day they are the prophets of our speedy rescue. See, see ! a favourable western gale wafts them kindly to the lower vallies, where they may flutter through fields of flowers, and forget how much they suffered from the frost, while they bask in the bright and cheering sun-shine.”—

Her long undisturbed night’s rest, and her confidence in the protection of her Patron-Saint had greatly improved Constantia’s spirits : Ida’s on the contrary were much more deprest than at the beginning of their journey. They soon reached the termination of their easy road ; and as fresh obstacles seemed again to impede their progress with every step, Ida asserted, that the difficulties,

culties, which they found in their present path were sufficient to prove, that they had judged ill in altering their direction. It was in vain, that Constantia attempted to demonstrate, that the course, which she so much regretted, would have led them into the most remote recesses of the Grimsel-Mountain, which towered above them on the *one* side; or that she pointed out the Tempest-horn, which rose on the other like some threatening giant, and on whose ice-covered limbs no path was discernable, which could possibly have been trodden by any mortal feet.

A narrow passage between two almost joining rocks guided them to the mountain of Gemmi: and now they perceived with joy, that instead of being one unvaried acclivity, their road every

now

now and then suffered them to descend. Its true, this road seemed rather calculated for the clambering of goats, than for the use of human beings : but though it was frequently interrupted by extensive chasms, they frequently found themselves assisted in passing them by broad planks, already laid over them by some friendly hand. Where there were none, and the Sisters were obliged to traverse the abyss with extreme hazard on some narrow shelf by clinging to the broken crags, still Constantia never would proceed, till she had discovered either an unemployed plank, which she brought from some other place, or the shattered branch of some wild fig-tree ; in order that she might stretch it across the chasm, and enable any future wanderer to cross it with less trouble and risque. She also
(as

(as they proceeded onwards) began to relate a wonderful legend, which had been told her by one of the nuns of Zurich, explaining, why of all these mountains that of Gemmi alone was observed never to be whitened with snow or ice. But Ida was too much out of heart, and too fearful of their being engaged in a wrong direction, to permit herself to pay much attention to the legend; and as *she* did not think it worth notice, there can be no sort of occasion for my repeating it here.

From a rock, whose height made their heads giddy, they had ventured at mid-day to cast their eyes down into the regions beneath them, and which the sinking heart of Ida now made her despair of ever reaching. They could perceive from hence several dark spots,
which

which Ida pronounced to be abysses, in which their path would at length terminate: and this decision she delivered with such positiveness, that Constantia would undoubtedly have consented to return, or else have chosen a different path, had either a return been now practicable, or another path been to be found. But as the day advanced, and the road still continued to sink itself lower and lower, with what rapture did they ascertain, that these supposed abysses in fact were parts of a village; whose smoking chimnies announced to them the neighbourhood of domestic comforts, and to whose peaceable shelter the cattle were at that moment returning from pasture.

The quick-sighted Ida was the first to make this discovery. She sank weeping

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ing upon the bosom of her sister, and entreated her to forgive the wayward humour, with which she had embittered their journey. Constantia folded the suppliant to her heart, and the Sisters united in offering up a prayer of fervent gratitude to the Saint, who had guided their wanderings so wonderfully and so well.

They resumed their journey, and now how easy did it seem to them ! As they descended, the path gradually enlarged itself ; and before the shutting in of night they found themselves safe under one of the cottage-roofs, where they learned for the first time after a long, long interval, what it was to rest without anxiety : in truth the short and broken slumbers, which visited them in the robber-valley, were scarcely worthy
of

of being called by the sweet name of rest.

While the Damsels of Werdenberg were engaged in the above adventures; while one of them was anxiously and vainly expected at the Convent of Zurich, and while the other was most unjustly censured and despised for her supposed elopement with the acknowledged bridegroom of her friend; Count Henry of Montfort was eagerly pursuing the wrong track, into which he had been enticed by the perfidious chaplain of Castle-March. Persuaded that he should soon overtake Ida, he continued to rush forwards without allowing himself to rest for a moment; till in a little village belonging to the Canton of Glarus he was attacked by a severe fever, produced by the violence of his mental agitation,

agitation, and by the inconsiderate speed, with which his journey had been performed. Nature at length yielded, and Henry was compelled to stop, and make his option either of recovering slowly, or of dying at once.

According to the established custom of all knight errants, he had commenced his expedition, not merely without forming a plan or consulting common sense, but without furnishing himself with a necessary supply of cash. He had left all his attendants far behind him; and as several days had elapsed since his separation from them, and as he had not thought proper to inform them of the object of his journey, they were totally unable to form even a guess as to the place, where it would be most likely

likely for them to rejoin their master. Luckily for Henry, in the paroxysms of his fever he frequently pronounced the name of Montfort. From this the good simple people of the village (who in truth had rendered him all the assistance, which their sorry means could allow) concluded, that the invalid must certainly belong to the old Count of Montfort. A messenger was despatched to verify the fact: and Count Egbert lost no time in sending able physicians to his nephew's aid, by whose care the fever was at length vanquished. As soon as the step could be taken without endangering his life, the Convalescent was removed to his paternal mansion, where he saw nothing but frowning countenances, and heard nothing from morning till night, except reproaches for

for his extraordinary conduct on his bridal day with Elizabeth. It seems, that Count Egbert now thought himself entitled to assume a higher tone of authority with his nephew, since the news was just arrived, that Henry's firm friend and powerful patron, the Emperor, was no more. He perished, in consequence of a malady which he contracted during an expedition against the Turks, and was no longer able to vindicate and enforce the claims of his favourite.

—"You cannot but acknowledge," said the old Count one day to his pale and still emaciated nephew, "that I have done every thing in my power to establish your happiness on a firm basis. Elizabeth of March, young, lovely, wise, power-

powerful, and (above all!) enormously rich, would have been your own at this moment, if you had not thought proper to abandon her for the laudable purpose of scampering away after a will-o'-the-wisp!—But now the business is over! No regrets can now put matters to rights again! Elizabeth is Countess of Torrenburg, is lost to you for ever, and what counsel to give you now, I protest, I know not!—Truly, your affairs are in a wretched condition: your claims on my succession cannot avail you till after my decease; and even then, they stand a fair chance of being worth but little, since I am now seriously thinking of contracting a matrimonial engagement: though you thought proper to break off my former
match

match by running away with my intended bride, the light and wanton Ida !”—

Here Henry assured him for the twentieth time, that he had not beheld Ida since the bridal day at the Castle of March ; and his uncle for the twentieth time replied, by assuring Henry, that in that case it was very extraordinary, that nobody else should know any thing at all about her. However, whether she had gone off with Henry or with any other person, for his own part he was determined, that anxiety about her should never turn one more hair of his head grey ; but that he would marry the first woman of a decent family, whom luck or accident should throw into his way.

In the course of his reproaches the old Count had mentioned Elizabeth's

marriage : this was a fact. Within a few days after Ida's disappearance, Elizabeth became Countess of Torrenburg. It has already been mentioned, that Count Frederick set forward for the Castle of March, in all the pomp of a bridegroom, to renew his addresses, fortified by an encouraging vision of his patron-saint, and assisted by the prayers of the worthy Father Hilarius. On the other hand, the house-priest of March had managed to screw the indignation of Elizabeth and her relations to the highest pitch against the fugitive Montfort and the Heiresses of Sargans ; and the lady's parents were proportionably penitent for the ill-judged rejection of Count Frederick's addresses. Finding his mistress and her friends in a temper of mind so favourable to his wishes, the

the superannuated lover needed only to make his proposals, in order to have them accepted. But little discussion was necessary; all parties were soon of the same mind, and Elizabeth in a few days entered the Castle of Torrenburg as its mistress. From that hour her every word, her every action was such, as proved her to be worthy of the high station, in which she was placed by the choice of this excellent nobleman; against whom no possible objection could be suggested, except that he was old enough to be the grand-father of his blooming wife. But to Elizabeth's disappointed heart his age was rather a recommendation than an objection. After Montfort's perfidy she felt it impossible for her ever to love another

man as her husband ; but she loved Count Frederick as her father ; she esteemed and revered him, nor from her conduct towards him would any one have supposed, that her happy husband was not still in possession of all the advantages and charms of youth. All affection for the ungrateful Henry seemed extinguished in her bosom, and the good old Count enjoyed with her a much greater share of happiness, than he had any reason to expect would have been the case. Nor was her behaviour towards her husband alone praiseworthy : she conducted herself on all occasions with so much discretion, and displayed throughout such winning graces and enlarged benevolence, that she became the object of universal respect,

respect, and was proposed as a model to be admired and imitated by all the daughters of Helvetia.

In one point alone her prudence was in default. There was an individual in the Castle of Torrenburg, whose influence with her husband was omnipotent; but for whom she felt an aversion so insurmountable, that scarcely could she endure him in her presence; and whom she was rash enough to endeavour at removing, before she had examined whether her strength was equal to the undertaking, and whether this offence offered to the antient household gods, might not draw down some heavy punishment upon her own unsuspecting head.

This detested and persecuted object of Elizabeth's efforts was no other, than

the keeper of all the consciences in the Castle of Torrenburg, was no other than the devout Father Hilarius! She was not aware, that it was to him and his saints, that she was chiefly indebted for the illustrious title which she bore, and the splendid station which she occupied. Perhaps, even had she been conscious of her obligation, she would have but little approved of the crooked paths, by which the Friar had contrived to conduct her to her elevated situation.

In fulfilment of his vow, Count Frederick had recompensed the patron-saints of his two clerical allies most liberally for the possession of his adored Elizabeth. The chaplain of Castle-March (whose only capital fault was avarice) was well contented with the reward of
his

his exertions : not so was Hilarius ! He had formed far greater plans, and indulged more glorious expectations. He had made no sort of doubt, that he should gain no less a share of the wife's confidence, than he already possessed of the husband's. Instead of this, he obtained from her nothing but aversion and contempt ; and from the moment of his being convinced, that such were her sentiments towards him, fury took entire possession of his misanthropic heart, and he brooded day and night over plans of swift-coming vengeance.

His disappointment in the present was greatly embittered by his foreseeing the failure of all those hopes, which he had long grounded upon the future. Much time had not elapsed since his marriage, when the superannuated Frederick com-

municated to the chaplain in confidence certain dispositions of his estates after his death, which could not fail to be highly disagreeable to the avaricious Monk. Every day more fascinated by the perfections of his beautiful wife, the Count tortured himself to discover some means, by which he might express in the most striking manner his gratitude to her, whose attentions shed a gleam of such bright sunshine over the evening of his closing life. He secretly bequeathed to her every thing, which it was possible for him to give, without entirely laying aside all justice to the young Countesses of Werdenberg: since much as he held himself insulted by their late conduct, still he was too generous to deprive them of any thing, to which the name which they bore could enable

enable them to advance the claims of justice.

His confessor was initiated into all these mysteries. Scarcely while he listened to them, could Hilarius restrain his rage within the bounds of decency. He saw all the fond hopes, which he had built upon Frederick's want of heirs and attachment to the church and its servants, destroyed at one blow ; and he gnashed his teeth for spite to think, that it was out of his power to prevent the Count's benevolent intentions towards his wife from being carried into immediate and complete effect.

As for Elizabeth, she was entirely ignorant of those weighty proofs of his affection, which Count Frederick designed for her after his decease. She was equally ignorant of the spite and envy,

which this large bequest had excited against her in one of the most malignant of human hearts. She continued to proceed in her straight-forward benevolent course without turning to the right or to the left: she treated her decrepit husband with unabated kindness and attention unwearied; and she denied herself no opportunity of convincing Hilarius, that he was the object of her fixed aversion, and that she was decidedly bent on procuring sooner or later his expulsion from the Castle of Torrenburg.

Oh! that she had carried that design into execution before one of the basest attempts, that ever was plotted by a villain's brain, was ripe enough for action! Yet perhaps the will of Heaven ordained, that this plan should be suffered to ripen, in order that it might effect

the overthrow of its guilty author, and exhibit the merits of the noble lady of the Castle in the fullest blaze of all their purity and lustre!

Oh! generous Elizabeth! you for whom I write, and for whom I trust, that I have not written in vain! Is it permitted me to relate your own glorious actions to yourself? Yet why do I hesitate?—She, who (I doubt not) while perusing these leaves has not hesitated to bestow many a tear of compassion on the undeserved sorrows, many a tribute of admiration on the heroic patience, many an expression of delight and gratitude at the fortunate escape, of those whom she calls—“*her enemies*,”—surely *she* need not avert her eyes, while my faithful hand places her before the glass, in which she may behold the

reflection of her own excellence ! She knows well, that I am no flatterer. I have not concealed from her, that she is proud, rash, not disinclined to resentment for injuries, and obstinate in adhering to her determinations, however inconsiderately those determinations may have been formed. But neither will I conceal, that I know her to be generous, benevolent, courageous, resolute, disinterested ; an avowed enemy of vice, however fascinating be the shape which it assumes ; an enthusiastic adorer of virtue, however humble be the station which it occupies, however lowly be the habit which it wears. Such is the faint portrait of her, whom future historians will paint in far more brilliant colours ; such is the portrait of Elizabeth of Torrenburg !

Hilarius had long been secretly connected with a society of mountaineers, who (by means of the private entrance to the Donat-Fortress) might be reckoned the Count's nearest neighbours. The precise nature of this union between the Monk and the Banditti belongs to the secret history of these miscreants, in which we are not sufficiently well instructed to authorize our giving any account of it in these memoirs. Let it suffice, that the union was a very close one ; perhaps, it was a long-established custom for the robbers to connect themselves with some ecclesiastic, in memory of the original founder of their society, the celebrated Abbot Luprian. Alas ! it is a very painful task for me, myself an ecclesiastic, the successor of that Abbot Luprian, the cotemporary of this
Monk

Monk Hilarius, to point out the stains, with which the vices of individuals have polluted the sacred habit!—Yet it is essential, that the whole truth should be laid before Elizabeth's eyes, and I will not hesitate to perform my duty to the full.

The avarice of Hilarius was insatiable. The custody of that deserted quarter of the Count's residence, which was now only known by the name of the Donat-Fortress, was intrusted to him; nothing could be more convenient for the robbers than such a retreat, where they could either take refuge, when the pursuit after them was too hot to admit of their venturing back to their valley; or where they could remain concealed and unsuspected of being in the neighbourhood, till the precise moment should arrive.

arrive for executing their plans of devastation with the most complete success. Accordingly, no sum appeared to them to counterbalance the value of such a refuge; and Hilarius annually received an immense tribute for allowing them the use of the subterraneous passage, and also of such of the apartments of the Donat-Fortress, as were best adapted to their purposes and profession. Here they had a well-appointed armoury; here they deposited their prey, till circumstances admitted of its removal to the valley; and here (among many other precautions for their safety) they had not neglected to lay in a large stock of provisions, and above all several hogsheads of the best old Rhenish wine.

But

But though they did not neglect any occasion of increasing their wealth by the plunder of passengers and of the country at large, still there was one vast undertaking, which lay most at the hearts of *the Warriors of the Mountains* ; for that was the title, by which the free-booters preferred being distinguished.—Of this undertaking Hilarius was the original suggestor, and without his aid they were well aware, that it never could be carried into execution. The object of it was nothing less, than to put the Warriors of the Mountains in possession of the whole domains of the Count of Torrenburg, with the exception of such parts as his pious enthusiasm should have induced him to bequeath to the Convent, of which Hilarius was a worthy member.

The

The plans were so well arranged, that nothing could seem more improbable than a failure: nothing indeed prevented their having been already carried into execution except the immoderate price, which Hilarius demanded in recompense of his services.

Matters, however, were so nearly concluded between the contracting parties, that Hilarius had occasionally introduced some of the principal robbers into the Castle in various disguises, in order that they might become thoroughly acquainted with the nature of the place, which they were to attack; might spy out the weaker parts of its defences; and by being aware of the obstacles to their designs, might be prepared to overcome them. Confiding in the terrific tales respecting the ghosts, which
haunted

haunted it, he had even ventured frequently to give his allies midnight entertainments in the deserted chambers of the Donat-Fortress. The superstitious domestics shook with terror, as they saw gleams of light streaming through the worm-eaten casements, and doubted not, that the ghosts of the antient tyrants of Carlsheim and Sargans had invited all the other infernal spirits to a feast in their former earthly residence. In this manner had the Count's enemies frequently been within a few hundred yards of him unsuspected; while he (good man) was dreaming, that his barred portals and lifted draw-bridge secured him against any possible attack.

Yet his good fortune so ordained it, that the striking this important blow,
was

was still delayed from time to time : Hilarius too was of opinion, that the fittest time for making the long-meditated attack would be immediately after the Count's decease, when the want of lineal heirs must necessarily produce much confusion among the numerous claimants, and when in all probability the Castle's inhabitants would be found entirely off their guard. The impatient robbers were by no means satisfied with this opinion : they were for making the attempt immediately ; but unless they could convince Hilarius, their opposition availed them nothing. He consented to their taking possession of the Donat-Fortress ; but he took care to keep it well locked and bolted, so that the supposed spectres could not by any means invade the inhabited part of the Castle,

Castle, till it should be his own good will and pleasure to admit them.

It was at this period, that the Countesses of Werdenberg were acknowledged by Count Frederick, and were immediately considered by the Monk as obstacles to his designs. Looking upon Constantia as destined to the veil, his whole undivided hatred was monopolized by Ida ; and he never rested, till he had ruined her in her uncle's good opinion, nay (by means of her mysterious flight) in the good opinion of the world. I have already related, in what manner he delivered her into the power of the robbers ; who gratified him doubly, first by relieving him from a person whose absence he wished, and whose blood he was not quite villain enough to shed with his own hands,

hands, and secondly by rewarding him for the possession of so lovely a girl with a considerable sum of money.

As to what became afterwards of the unhappy Ida, that was a matter of little interest to Father Hilarius : but it would have been a matter of very *great* interest, if he had guessed Randolph's intention of giving himself a legal claim to the inheritance of Sargans by the possession of her hand, and of reinstating the detested Ida hereafter in those rights, of which the Monk had taken so much trouble to deprive her.

The daily presents, which Frederick's generosity bestowed on his spiritual guide, made the latter by no means anxious to see the moment of his patron's dissolution. He had forwarded

to

to the utmost of his power Elizabeth's marriage, not only on account of the advantages promised both to himself and his Convent by the superannuated lover, whenever this union should be accomplished, but also from being persuaded, that the affectionate care of such a wife would be giving the Count a new lease for many years of existence.

But when the Monk perceived Elizabeth's decided aversion to himself, and that her remonstrances had already produced a degree of coolness in her husband towards both his person and his counsels, he found it necessary to hasten the execution of his plans. The venom of spite and vengeance, which had so long been working in his heart, at length overflowed; the glimmering sparks of treason broke into flames; his

his intercourse with the Warriors of the Mountain grew more close than ever ; and the peaceable inhabitants of the Castle were almost terrified out of their senses at the frequent feasts given by the ghosts of the antient Lords of Sargans.

The reports relative to the goblins of the Donat-Fortress at length reached Elizabeth. She had the rashness on one of these terrific nights, when all the other inmates of the Castle went about obstinately with their eyes and ears shut, as obstinately to keep hers wide open. Unattended, she ventured to approach the deserted chambers ; and the sounds which reached her, as she stood without, convinced her, that if they really proceeded from spirits, those spirits must needs have retained a considerable

siderable portion of their former earthly habits.

Not the most distant suspicion of what really was the occasion of this uproar, was likely to suggest itself to her mind. She only concluded, and very naturally, that the belief in apparitions served some of her domestics as a cloak to hide their midnight and dissolute entertainments from the knowledge of their superiors. This was a practice, to which as mistress of the family she thought it absolutely necessary to put an immediate stop. Accordingly, without loss of time she informed her husband of what she had observed, and of what she supposed to be the fact: the household was immediately summoned, and ordered to attend their Lord and Lady to the
haunted

haunted chambers, which they were determined to examine without a moment's delay.

But the uninvited guests were already aware of their approach. One of Elizabeth's women was in the confidence of the Monk, and hastened to warn him by a signal previously agreed upon, that danger was at hand. Hilarius immediately insisted, that the lights should be extinguished, and that the Banditti should retire with all speed through the secret passage, which (he asserted) would be the most spirit-like way of taking their departure. But the robbers, who were heated with wine, declared, that it was high time for them to lay aside the characters of spirits, and that they never should find a more prosperous moment for making their long-

meditated attack, than the present. The continual postponement of this attack had long made them suspect their ally of playing them false, and they had prepared themselves for taking the power out of his hands with the very first favourable opportunity—the caverns below were filled with Banditti: those who were in the fortress were no inconsiderable number ; and confident of a fresh supply of troops if necessary, they rushed forwards to meet the Lord of the Castle, without deigning to summon to their assistance their friends in the cavern. Indeed, they looked upon victory not only as certain, but easy, when their only antagonists were terrified domestics, headed by no better generals than an inexperienced female, and a gray-headed man just
escaped

escaped from the bed of sickness, and weighed down by the number of his years. Accordingly, without listening to the Monk's remonstrances, they rushed towards the great portal; and Elizabeth with her followers no sooner entered the court, in which the Donat-Fortress was situated, than to their utter surprize they found themselves attacked on all sides.

How lively were the colours, in which the enraptured Frederick described to me this the most glorious transaction of Elizabeth's life!—with what enthusiasm did *he* relate, with what enthusiasm did *I* hear, how in this moment of consternation Elizabeth alone preserved her presence of mind and the look of undaunted resolution; how, when her terrified attendants re-

coiled at the approach of the supposed spectres, she showed them the sword, which gleamed in the weak hands of their aged master, urged them to defend a life so precious, and shamed them by reproaches into following his example; how she wrested from the hand of a beardless robber the weapon, which he already pointed against her husband's heart, and instantly buried it in the assassin's own; how when the weak old Frederick was at length struck to the earth, she threw herself before him, and made her breast his shield; and how while occupied in this generous office, and while thus devoting her own life in order to preserve his, she received a wound upon her brow, whose scar now forms the noblest ornament of the most lovely face in all Helvetia!

Frederick

Frederick was wounded, and his attendants conveyed him away from the scene of action ; but Elizabeth still maintained her post, directing by her advice, and invigorating by her presence the small but faithful body of her retainers. The Banditti found by this time, that victory was not to be so easily gained, as they had hitherto expected ; and they thought it prudent to summon to their assistance the lurkers in the subterraneous caverns. Elizabeth perceived, that the numbers of the assailants was suddenly and alarmingly increased. Every moment seemed to add to their strength, and it was evident, that unless some means of preventing the foe from profiting by this new accession of power could be discovered, every thing was lost.

Fortunately, in this critical moment the eye of the Heroine rested upon the portcullis, which on account both of its weight and workmanship was esteemed a master-piece of art. She sprang forwards; she still grasped the sword, of which she had deprived the robber, and with a single blow she severed the sustaining cord. It fell with a heavy crash, and destroyed in its descent several of the new-comers, who were over-hasty in flying to the assistance of their hardly-pressed companions.

—“Courage, my friends!” exclaimed Elizabeth with a sudden burst of joy; “resist your enemies but for a few minutes longer, and we are safe! hark, how the alarm-bells make the air resound! and see! the castle-portals are
thrown

thrown open ! rejoice ! rejoice ! our preservers are at hand !”—

It had been one of the Countess's first orders, that the alarm-bells should be sounded without delay, and as soon as any signs were observed of obedience to the signal for assistance, that the Warder should set wide the gates for the reception of those, who might hasten to their relief. She was obeyed ; but no one expected, that these precautions would bring them any more powerful succour than the presence of a few bands of peasants, armed in haste, and unaccustomed to such midnight attacks ; or else perhaps the troops of some of the neighbouring noblemen, but who were all at too great a distance to admit of their reaching the Castle of Torrenburg, before the business should have been finally decided.

But Elizabeth, when she gave these orders, was better aware of their importance. The terrible event, which I have just been describing, took place on the night preceding St. Martin's festival. St. Martin's day was also the birth-day of the Count of Torrenburg ; a day, which Elizabeth now celebrated for the first time, since she became a wife, and which she was determined to distinguish by a most splendid entertainment. For many weeks had her messengers been employed in traversing the neighbouring provinces, for the purpose of inviting the most distinguished noblemen and their families to be present at a tournament, to be held at the Castle of Torrenburg in honour of the nativity of its Lord. Count Frederick, though he was now too much enfeebled by age to admit of his
taking

taking a part in them himself, still delighted in witnessing such martial sports: they recalled to him many a pleasing and many a glorious occurrence of his honourable life; and Elizabeth had not failed to select for his amusement on his birth-day that particular species, which, her own observation and the experience of others had given her reason to know, would be most acceptable to her husband.

It was on this very night, that the invited guests were expected at the Castle, accompanied by their wives and daughters with a numerous retinue. It had been settled, that they should not arrive till after midnight, in order that their being in the Castle might continue unknown to the Count till the next morning; when it was Eliza-

beth's design to conduct him (still ignorant of what was going to take place) to the prepared lists, where he would unexpectedly find himself seated in the circle of his best friends and well-wishers, in order to witness that kind of entertainment, in which he most peculiarly delighted. All her preparations had been made with the greatest secrecy; none but a few of her most immediate friends and domestics were in her confidence; and therefore few except herself were aware, that the alarm-bells were sounded for the purpose of calling to her assistance those expected guests, who (she was certain from the lateness of the hour) must needs be at no great distance.

Her hopes were soon verified. The draw-bridge had scarcely fallen, when

it re-echoed under the hasty trampling of horses'-hoofs. The court-yard was soon filled with soldiers, who without staying to demand what was the matter, hastened with drawn swords to assist the Countess and her faithful supporters. Elizabeth was a heroine in the moment of need ; but her heart was still that of a weak and tender female. She was anxious to rejoin her bleeding husband ; her wound was painful ; and still more painful to her feelings was the sight of the blood, which streamed around her, and of the mangled corpses with which the pavement was strewed. Most joyful was she, when she found herself at liberty to resign her dangerous and hateful post ; her friend of youth, Richard of Ulmenhorst, and Count Oswald of March (her brother)

took the command of her forces ; and she now flew to the chamber of that husband, who but a few minutes before had been indebted to her for his life. She found, that his wound (it was but a slight one) was already drest ; and that he was earnestly insisting, that his attendants should lead him to rejoin his glorious wife, and suffer him either to conquer by her side, or perish with that dear one : they sank into each other's arms, and melted into tears of joy at finding themselves once more in safety. Seldom have youthful lovers, even in their happiest moments, felt such unmixed pleasure, as was now felt by Elizabeth, while she clasped the decrepit Frederick to her heart.

Before day-break the victory was complete. The knights, who had been

invited to a mock-fight, and had found one so serious, did not leave their work only half finished—the portcullis was raised again; every corner of the Donat-Fortress was investigated: the entrance to the subterraneous vaults was found open and unguarded, and these also underwent an examination. Here a considerable number of the free-booters were discovered, and after an obstinate resistance slaughtered; but a few of them found means to effect their escape from the caverns, and carried the news of this disaster to their associates in the valley of Halsberg.

Gero was one of the first, who fell in the assault; Randolph was taken prisoner: as to the author of all this mischief, the infamous Hilarius, he was found to all appearance lifeless in one
of

of the caverns, whither he had retreated during the heat of the combat. He had suffered so severely both in the conflict, and from the pressure of those, who (like himself) crowded to take refuge in the secret vaults, that though life was not quite extinct in him, he expired, before he had time to acknowledge his numerous transgressions, and receive their absolution. My knowledge of his private transactions and views was gleaned from the writings, which were afterwards found in his chamber, and in his cell at the Convent, of which he was so unworthy a member. These papers were confided to me by the Bishop of Coira; and their contents were such as rendered them highly improper to meet the eyes of the laity, who are already but too apt to scoff

scoff, when a church-man slips, and from whom the servants of Religion ought carefully to veil the errors of her unsteady children.—But the love of truth, the interests of justice, and the welfare of two poor persecuted creatures, made it necessary for me to place everything in the clearest light before the eyes of her, who (I am certain) needs only to be convinced, that they are *really* persecuted, in order to become their most strenuous defender.

So entirely had their evil star the ascendant, that even this overthrow of their enemies only served to make the Sisters appear in the eyes of the world in a still more odious point of view. Hilarius died without having time to acknowledge the pains, which he had taken to effect Ida's ruin : it was not till
lately,

lately, that I obtained the certainty of the Monk's perfidy, and of the innocence of my poor wards ; facts appeared so strong against her, that even I for a considerable time was compelled to give up the fruitless office of defending her ; and the proofs, which spoke so loudly in her disfavour, seemed to increase in number with every fresh occurrence. Several of the robbers had been made prisoners, and underwent a close examination respecting the authors of their enterprize and its object. Among other things, they confest, that a damsel, understood to be a Countess of Werdenberg, had made a long abode in their society ; that she was evidently the object of their captain's affection ; and that it was reported among the Banditti, that she had consented to become

become his wife, on condition of his establishing her claims to the domains of Sargans and Carlsheim by force of arms. Randolph, being questioned respecting these assertions, in a great measure confirmed them ; he only denied, that Ida had ever given her consent in express words to the enterprise ; but he profest his firm belief, that on those conditions he had every reason to believe her disposed to unite her fate with his. He had dropped such plain hints of his designs against the Count, that she could not possibly have misunderstood him, though her discretion made her prefer the appearing ignorant of a scheme, whose object was the ruin of her former benefactor : but as she must have gathered his intention from various circumstances, and as she
still

continued to treat him, not merely with unabated, but even with increased complaisance, he had certainly good reason to suppose, that his meditated plan was by no means disagreeable to her.—Alas ! poor Ida ! had she dared to abate that complaisance, and to express the sentiments of abhorrence, with which the robber's views inspired her, what would have been her reward ?—ill usage ; death perhaps ; or what would have been still worse, life with the loss of honour !

But these reflections did not occur to Randolph or his hearers ; they believed his arguments to be well founded, and that Ida had approved of the design, which had so nearly terminated her benefactor's existence. That she had been privy to it, is true : she had not misunderstood

misunderstood Randolph's hints, though she was not aware of the exact nature of his intentions ; but no sooner was she in safety, than her first object was to provide for that of the Count of Torrenburg.

The village, which at length afforded them security and rest, was called Edel-Bothen : here they were compelled to pass the night and the succeeding morning, in order to recover from the fatigues of their late painful journey ; and it was from hence, that a messenger was dispatched to the Castle of Torrenburg with a letter, written by Constantia in a disguised hand and without a signature. Ida, who still trembled at the thoughts of being either compelled to give her hand to the old Count of Montfort, or to seclude herself for life within

within the dreary walls of a cloister, was unwilling to let her incensed uncle know, where she might be found; and Constantia, though she had herself no motive for concealment, was afraid of being the means of discovering her sister. With much difficulty, and after many unsuccessful attempts, the following lines were at length completed, and a peasant was dispatched with them to the Castle of Torrenburg.



Count of Torrenburg !

Peruse these lines from an unknown but sincere friend, who trembles, lest the warning should come too late. In your domestic priest, the worthless Hilarius, you nourish a traitor, whose plans if successful will terminate in your destruction. He has already driven many innocent persons into the jaws of ruin : and now to finish his career with a master stroke of villainy, he meditates the overthrow of his generous benefactor. Secure him, and let him and his papers undergo a strict examination. Above all, set a watch over the Donat-Fortress, and let the private entrance be

be carefully closed up, which you will find on the left hand of the window in the large chamber, which terminates the southern wing of the ruins. That entrance communicates with a subterraneous passage, well known to the robbers, who have so long been the terror of Helvetia, and with whom Hilarius carries on the most intimate correspondence. Hasten then to prevent their making any ill use of their knowledge of this communication; and if this warning should be in time to save you from danger, the writers of this letter will thank Heaven as for a benefit conferred upon themselves.



THIS well-meant epistle did not reach the Castle of Torrenburg till several days after St. Martin's day. It was read aloud at the Count's table, when the hall was almost filled with knights and ladies, who were assembled there on account of the festivities, with which Elizabeth thought it right to celebrate her Lord's escape from the perilous Banditti. The letter, while reading, was frequently interrupted by loud bursts of scornful laughter and expressions of derision from the whole assembly ; yet 'tis said, that Frederick and Elizabeth did not laugh, and were quite silent. It was easily

easily guest, from whom this unavailing warning came ; and Count Oswald of March, (whose family pride had been stung to the quick by young Montfort's conduct on the bridal day, and whose affection for his sister made him the inveterate enemy of any-one, who offered her any injury or unkindness) insisted upon being allowed to answer the letter.

According to her instructions, Ida's messenger had no sooner delivered the letter, than he hastened away from the Castle : but two horsemen were dispatched after him in all haste, and the peasant was compelled to return for an answer. That answer pained the Sisters to the very heart ; they preserved it carefully ; they read it over and over again, and every time with fresh pain ;
and

and they at length showed it to me, as a proof of their total renunciation by their uncle. Count Oswald had written as follows.



THE fair Ida's well-conceived letter arrived at the very time, which she intended ; that is, when it was too late to be of any use. First to invent schemes of treachery, and then when they fail, to assume the part of a warning friend against those very schemes, was certainly one of the most dexterous artifices, that ever was produced by female ingenuity ! Unfortunately, there are some people, who are not deceived even by artifices so dexterous. The Count of Torrenburg has been rescued from the Banditti, not by the fair Ida's warning *after* the event had taken place, but by the courage and affection of an angel, whose

whose name was once Elizabeth of March; whose name would have been Elizabeth of Montfort, had it not been for the fair Ida's coquetry; and whose name is now Elizabeth of Torrenburg, in spite of all the pains, which the fair Ida gave herself to prevent her ever bearing that illustrious title. Yes! Elizabeth is Countess of Torrenburg: I protest, I cannot but pity the poor damsel Ida for so severe a disappointment, as this union must give to her views upon Count Frederick's inheritance. Besides the loss of her benefactor's good opinion, she has also to regret that of her lover the robber Randolph, who inhabits one of the Count's dungeons; so that all her hopes in that quarter are completely annihilated. It seems too, that she has not even contrived to secure the light and

worthless heart of Henry of Montfort, who (probably grown already weary of her) has returned to his uncle's residence ; as report says, a sincere penitent for having suffered himself to lose such a treasure as the hand and heart of Elizabeth through the artifices of a perfidious coquette. Probably by this time the fair Ida has found out, that this maxim contains more truth than she supposed ; viz. " that crooked paths lead to precipices."

Randolf, the fair Ida's lover, is a prisoner ; Henry of Montfort, the fair Ida's dupe, has recovered his senses ; Gero and Hilarius, the fair Ida's friends, are both dead ; and Count Frederick, the fair Ida's intended victim, is aware, that Hilarius is not the only snake, whom he has warmed in his bosom.

Count

Count Frederick of Torrenburg sends the fair Ida his best wishes for her speedy repentance, and ventures to suggest, that a convent will be in future her fittest residence.—He begs however, that this may only be considered as his *advice*; since looking upon her no longer as his relation, he has no longer any right to give her a command. At all events, he begs, that whether she takes that advice or not, she will not think it necessary to inform him of her proceedings, since he has now but one wish on earth respecting her; to hear of her no more!

IDA's tears streamed plentifully, while she read these cutting lines. She gave the letter in silence to Constantia, who felt the unmerited reproaches no less acutely than her sister. A long pause ensued, which at length was broken by Constantia.

—"There is no mention made of *me*!" said she,—“no more, than if I were no longer in existence!—Well! well! it is better to be quite forgotten, than to be so remembered!”—

—"How could they guess," exclaimed Ida, "that *I* was the writer of that letter?—a letter, which He, who sees the heart, can witness for me, I wrote

wrote out of pure good will to my unkind uncle.”—

—“ And how strange,” rejoined Constantia, “ that they should misunderstand your character so completely, as to believe you capable of such perfidy ! And how cruel of them to insult your misfortunes by such an unfeeling taunting letter ! ”—

With such inquiries did they torture themselves during a whole tedious day ; and they endeavoured in vain to discover, what part of Ida’s conduct could have authorised a man, who had once shown her so much benevolence, to view her on a sudden in a light so perfectly odious. It appeared too from this letter, that Count Frederick’s ill opinion of her was also the opinion of the world ; and what had she done to

deserve this universal ill opinion?—The Sisters were not aware, that a prejudice once conceived gains strength with every minute, and presses into its services the most insignificant occurrences: till the supposed offence from a molehill is swelled into a mountain, and shade added to shade gradually makes the detested object appear in colours sufficiently black, to *justify* its being made the object of detestation.

No mention had been made of Constantia in Count Oswald's letter, because on the one hand her gentle inoffensive manners had prevented her having any enemies; and on the other hand, her supposed participation in her sister's plans prevented the parties concerned from being her friends.—It appeared, that after quitting the Castle
of

of March on the memorable day of Elizabeth's intended wedding she had not thought proper to return to her convent. She had been way-laid by those robbers, who (as it was now believed) were at that very time in confederacy with her sister. No one doubted, that the free-booters had acted under Ida's directions, and with Constantia's concurrence; that the latter was totally under the influence of the former; and that if the one sister was not quite so deserving of censure as the other, she was at least equally unworthy of protection. It was concluded, that she was at that moment Ida's companion; and it was agreed by all, that the most proper mode of treating her, was not to bestow on her even the slightest notice.

When the bitterness of the first shock was over, the Sisters found, that they had no reason to consider their situation as at all altered for the worse by the perusal of this insulting letter. It had not been in their contemplation to effect a reconciliation with the Count of Torrenburg; after so much as they had suffered, they no longer indulged a wish for any thing except retirement and repose. Ida's resentment against her lover, for having offered his hand to Elizabeth, was not yet appeased: and after the injurious suspicions, to which her conduct at the Castle of March had (as she learned from Count Oswald's letter) given rise, she thought it highly incumbent on her to make no inquiries respecting him. She accordingly resolved to verify the remainder of her

2 sister's

sister's fortunate vision, and re-assume the name of Rosanna Tell.—Constantia for a while refused to follow her example, and declared her determination of hiding herself for ever from the world in the Convent of Engelberg: but Ida besought her, with so much earnestness and with so many tears, “not to deprive her of the society of the only person, who still loved her, and whom she still dared to love,” that Constantia was compelled however reluctantly to give way.

A ring of some value, which Ida wore on the day, which made her a captive, and of which Randolph's respect had prevented his depriving her, purchased a small hut and garden, in which the Countesses of Werdenberg were but too happy to obtain a shelter. Here then

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they

they remained in tranquil obscurity, unknowing and unknown : till the decease of the Count of Torrenburg and its consequences compelled them once more to take a part in the world, and again become acquainted with its splendours, and its cares.

By the will of Count Frederick, the whole of his domains descended to his wife ; the Damsels of Werdenburg were disinherited, nor was this sufficient. A clause of the most disgraceful import declared the Count's reasons for renouncing them, and thus held them up to the world as proper marks for the finger of contempt. It seems, that there still existed a younger branch of the House of Werdenberg, but with whose members the Sisters had never held any intercourse. The ignominious clause in

Count

Count Frederick's will greatly offended the pride of these high-born noblemen. That any persons belonging to their family should deserve to be mentioned upon record in such opprobrious terms, appeared to them the most intolerable of all offences; and they vowed never to rest, till they had compelled the delinquents to renounce their title to a name, which (till they assumed it) had never been stained with disgrace.— They agitated this business with so much effect, that at length an act was obtained from the Emperor, enjoining two Damsels calling themselves by the names of Ida and Constantia, Countesses of Werdenberg, to lay aside those titles, as having forfeited them by their disgraceful conduct, even supposing that they really possess by birth a right to bear

bear them; a fact, of which, the act professed to doubt the veracity.—It also forbade the reception of the said Damsels into any religious community, except such as were specified by name, and which were those only, whose institution (as was universally known) permitted the acceptance of persons of dissolute characters for the laudable purpose of reformation.

The Lords of Werdenberg were so diligent in making this act public, that it even reached the obscure valley, in which the Sisters had sheltered themselves under borrowed names. Little as they valued the pride of birth, and the empty boast of high-sounding title, the disgrace thrown upon them by this so public act was too insulting to be endured even by their humility. It was absolutely

absolutely necessary, that some steps should be taken to vindicate themselves from such undeserved aspersions. Accordingly without loss of time they addrest letters to the Abbess of Zurich and to their guardians, Abbot Conrad, and the good Bishop of Coira. They disclosed the place of their concealment, asserted the gross injustice of the Emperor's act, and avowed their willingness to lay every particular respecting themselves or their conduct before either of their guardians, or the respected Abbess.

Till this period they had neglected to apply to these firm friends ; because they felt a total indifference to she station, which they had lost ; considered the pleasures of the great world as withdrawn from them for ever ; and only wished to pass the remainder of
 their

their lives in tranquillity and oblivion. Their letters communicated the greatest joy to those, to whom they were address; and Abbot Conrad lost not a moment in hastening to comfort the poor afflicted ones, and to assure them of his unabated regard and anxiety for their welfare.

It was no difficult task for the Sisters to convince this partial friend of their innocence. He insisted upon the necessity of their returning to the world, and Constantia consented to quit her solitude: but Ida was resolute never again to resume her proper station, till her honour and reputation were re-established in their full purity and with undiminished lustre.

And how is this to be effected? Oh! Elizabeth, it is you alone, who can
answer

answer that question. You have seen, how these unjustly persecuted Girls have been deprived of every thing, of their inheritance, of their fair fame, of the very name, to which their birth entitled them: you have seen their innocence and your own error. Your generosity, your love of justice will tell you, what you ought to do: to those noble sentiments, to your own noble self, I dare trust my cause without a single terror.—

Henry of Montfort's illness had been long and dangerous. He was scarcely recovered, when two successive attacks of apoplexy convinced his uncle of a truth, which he had long been unwilling to confess to himself. He could no longer deny, that it would be more suitable at his time of life to turn his thoughts

thoughts towards the grave, than the bridal bed ; but still though he was himself no longer the hero of them, his marrying-plans preserved their long-established dominion over his fancy. Henry was his undoubted heir ; his attention to Count Egbert during his illness had made a deep and very favourable impression upon the old man's mind ; he suddenly became a favourite, to secure whose happiness in life was now Count Egbert's chief and almost only object ; and in the old man's opinion, happiness in life was to be obtained by no other possible means, than by marriage. Henry was nearly of the same opinion with him. Unluckily, the only point, on which they differed, was the only material point in the whole affair. Both agreed, that a marriage

marriage ought to take place ; but each proposed a different person, and neither would give up the object of his choice. Henry insisted upon his engagement to Ida, and declared, that while she existed, honour as well as love forbade his offering his hand to another : while Count Egbert protested with equal vehemence, that he never would consent to the union of his heir with a girl, whom the last will of her nearest relation had deprived of her inheritance and devoted to disgrace. The bride of his selection presented herself in a far more flattering light ; 'twas Elizabeth, the young and admired heiress of Torrenburg, whose hand would confer wealth and power on her husband, and whose heart had formerly been warmly disposed in Henry's favour. As he listened to this eulogium upon Elizabeth,

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an involuntary sigh escaped from the nephew's bosom. Ah! he felt but too sensibly the whole value of Elizabeth, and was fully conscious, how dear she would have been to him, had not Ida possess prior and more forcible claims on his affections. Now all thoughts of Elizabeth were quite unavailing: his heart by right was another's, and was no longer worthy of Elizabeth's acceptance. This he declared to his uncle, and exprest his resolution of keeping his engagements to Ida in terms so strong, that the old Count lost his patience completely. In the heat of passion, he ordered Henry to quit the Castle that instant, nor ever presume to come again into his presence.

He was obeyed; but the command was scarcely given, before it was repented of. He reflected, that this very
banish-

banishment would leave his nephew at liberty to contract the union, which it was so much his wish to prevent. The old man was little acquainted with Ida's character and turn of mind: he knew not, that delicate as were her notions on the subject of honour, the warmest entreaties of her beloved Henry would by no means be sufficient to persuade her to become Countess of Montfort.

Count Egbert's guards followed Henry, overtook him, and brought him back to his paternal Castle, where he was ordered into close confinement. How little did the writer of these lines ever imagine, that he should live to see menaces and chains employed, in order to compel a youth to give his hand to Elizabeth of March !

Henry exclaimed loudly against such injustice ! He demanded, that the opinion

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nion of his proposed bride should be taken in this affair. He declared himself convinced, that he could not possibly appeal to a more just tribunal, and that after what had past, a proposal of marriage would be rejected with no less firmness by Elizabeth, than by himself. The old Count denied this last assertion most positively. He maintained (and not without some show of plausibility) that in spite of his past offences Elizabeth was still weak enough to cherish a secret attachment to the man, by whom she had been so unworthily forsaken : nay, he even went so far as to profess his firm belief, that the severity, with which she had treated the Damsels of Werdenburg, had its origin in this attachment ; and that nothing but female spite and jealousy against a successful rival, made
her

her so obstinately shut her eyes and ears against the justice of those claims, which in the opinion of many persons (thoroughly capable to decide upon such matters) were held to be most just, and founded on an unquestionable basis.

Such indeed was now the general opinion. Time, and the exertions of their guardians had cleared up many suspicious circumstances respecting the Sisters ; and the popular cry was fast turning to the side of Count Frederick's lineal heirs. Their uncle's testament underwent much censure, and created a kind of prejudice and ill will against Her, who had benefited by it so largely. Elizabeth herself was in some measure the cause of this loss of public estimation, which in truth every day diminished. She had accustomed the world
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for so long to see her act with uniform generosity, and to consider her as a person totally exempt from the ordinary imperfections of her sex, that as soon as her husband's will was made public, every one prepared themselves for some decided act of heroic self-denial in favour of the disinherited Sisters; and which perhaps they would not have expected from any other than Elizabeth, because they would not have believed any other capable of such an act. However, it is certain, that from Her they *did* expect it; it is also certain, that their expectations were disappointed; and unwilling to allow, that they had themselves required too much, they were extremely displeased with Her, whom they accused of not having done enough. Besides this, Elizabeth evidently fell into a great error,

error, in dealing with her inherited possessions, as if they had been her own purchased and personal property. Formed by nature to be no less rash than generous, she gave away whole districts, castles, and towns with as little concern, as if they had been of no more value than the roses, which encircled her head or bloomed upon her bosom.

This inconsiderate liberality produced the greatest discontent among those subjects, whom she bestowed away with so little ceremony. She is already informed of the uproar and confusion, which ensued ; but she is by no means aware of the extreme danger, in which she was at one time involved. The discontented vassals denied her right to make them over to another, and declared themselves to be lawfully

the vassals of the young Countesses of Werdenberg: they entered into a secret correspondence with the neighbouring Switzers: they dispatched messengers to the valley, where the Sisters had taken refuge, and assured them of their firm resolution to support their rights. Constantia was already departed; they found Ida alone in her humble cottage, and made the purport of their coming known to her. Tears of joy trickled down her cheeks as she listened, and her first words were prayers of gratitude to Heaven.

—“ My worthy friends,” said she at length, “ your words have given me the only comfort, which I now could look for on this side the grave! The Ida, whom a whole good and honest people demands for their sovereign, can

can never be that traitress, that unprincipled wanton, that ungrateful snake, which I have been termed so publicly and so unjustly. Your application has given me back my honour, has reconciled me with myself : this is all I could wish for ; now leave me, my friends, and bear with you my warmest thanks. Be faithful to your liege-lady ; Heaven and my uncle's will have destined her for your protrectress, and you will find her a noble one. I know well her merits, and admire them ; I envy her not her good fortune ; but be assured, that even did my happiness depend on my establishing those rights, which you state me to possess, the Ida whom your deputation has thus signally honoured, at least deserves that honour too well, to seek any benefit however great by

clandestine, and therefore by unworthy means."—

The deputies listened to her with astonishment; they requested her to reflect coolly upon their proposals, and left her with a promise to return.

And they *did* return, furnished with new and much more forcible arguments;—and yet those arguments were employed in vain. They had discovered Ida's former affection for Henry: they applied to Count Egbert, and laid their plans before him. As they appeared to reconcile all differences between his nephew and himself, he readily promised his assistance: and the deputies now delivered a letter to Ida, in which Count Egbert assured her of Henry's unabated attachment: he magnified the fortitude, with which his nephew had re-

sisted

sisted all attempts to shake his fidelity ; and he conjured her to accept the title of Countess of Montfort, since without the possession of her hand there was no happiness in life for Henry.

The poor Ida wept, as she read this letter : every line seemed an arrow in her very heart. She was conscious, that in her present humble state she could never become her lover's bride, and that the old Count's consent was entirely grounded on the prospect of her succeeding to Count Frederick's inheritance.—Yet she still shuddered at the thoughts of obtaining the accomplishment of her fondest wishes by means, which she felt to be unworthy of her ; she still positively rejected the proposals of the embassy, and declared herself convinced, that Henry of Mont-

fort was as little disposed as herself to assist any plan, whose object was to injure Elizabeth. The deputies still prest her to comply ; they would take no refusal ; and at length to free herself from their importunity she left the valley privately, and took refuge within a Convent, the name of which she concealed from every one except her sister and the Abbot of Cloister-Curwald.

Elizabeth's knowledge of these transactions was confined to their mere outward appearance. She knew, that she was calumniated by secret enemies, and justified by unknown friends ; but little did she suspect, that these favourable judges of her conduct were those very persons, against whom she had nourished in her heart the most inveterate prejudice. Its true, that she was not
without

without real friends, willing even to risk her displeasure, rather than suffer her to labour under such gross errors : the Abbot of Curwald often endeavoured to lay the history of the unfortunate Sisters before her eyes, but in vain : No one understood better than Elizabeth the secret of imposing silence on those, whom she suspected of an intention to say that, which it was by any means disagreeable to her to hear.

She suddenly thought fit to take up her abode in the Convent of Zurich, and there indulge her grief for the loss of Count Frederick without restraint. This was a step, which her differences with her discontented vassals rendered both agreeable to herself, and proper in the eye of the world : into the bargain, it possessed the further advantage (though

she thought it as well to confine this motive for her seclusion to her own bosom) of freeing her from the wearisome remonstrances of the Abbot, and from the truths, which he was so obstinately bent upon placing before her eyes. Its true, she was still exposed to receiving letters from him ; but those it was in her power not to answer ; or indeed not even to read, if the first lines gave her reason to believe, that the remainder would afford her but little satisfaction.

But Elizabeth was too good, too noble, to be entirely deserted by truth and virtue, however sedulously she strove to shun them. They pursued her to the Convent, and their imploring voices often spoke to her in the stillness of her solitary cell. I know from good authority, that many a seed of good has
fallen

fallen upon her heart, which she has vainly endeavoured to choak in brambles : and should I succeed in my attempt to seduce her unconsciously into perusing the history of the Damsels of Werdenberg, under the title of "The Sisters without a Name," (a title, which describes them but too well, since injustice and error have robbed them of their proper one) I shall look upon the victory as already won.

And yet by such a victory, what will be gained ? How is it in Elizabeth's power to benefit these persecuted girls ? Constantia, who (unknown to her former friend) now inhabits the same Convent with her, demands nothing in this world except permission to take the veil : Ida is contented with her humble habitation near the Lake of Thun ;

and far from requiring from Elizabeth anything more than mutual forgiveness, she is willing to compensate for the involuntary mortification, which she caused to her on her bridal-day, by the sacrifice of every thing ; even of that, which she holds dearest ! Yes, Elizabeth ; she is willing to sacrifice even the hand and affections of her Henry !

The proposal made by the deputies of Elizabeth's rebellious vassals was laid before Henry by his uncle. The plan, whose object was the ruin of the unsuspecting Countess of Torrenburg, was so well laid, and the preparations were in such forwardness, that it seemed almost impossible for the design to fail. Henry gave a feigned compliance to the old Count's proposals, and was rewarded with his liberty. The first use, which

he made of it, was to hasten to Richard of Ulmenhorst, to whom Elizabeth had entrusted the government of her domains during her seclusion in the Convent. To him did young Montfort discover the conspiracy against the Heiress of Torrenburg, and they agreed upon measures for defeating it. The noble Richard had loved Elizabeth in the earliest spring of his life, and had no reason to despair, till the blooming Henry appeared and won the prize, almost before he himself desired it. Richard now first knew the real character of his so long-hated rival: and to know it, and admire it, were but the same. The conspiracy was defeated; the new friends separated; and Henry hastened to the Lake of Thun.

—"Ida!" he exclaimed, "I am thine;

and for ever ! I have broken through every obstacle, which divided us ; I have severed every chain, which detained me from your arms. I renounce the name of Montfort, which has inflicted upon me nothing but misfortune : never shall the man, who so unjustly lords it over my possessions, hear of his persecuted nephew more. You, Ida, must renounce the title of Werdenberg, which has been the cause to you of so much sorrow, and resume that beloved name, which you bore, when we first met. This cottage, this garden, and this little flock are enough to content all the wishes of two loving hearts ; and Erwin Melthal and Rosanna Tell will pass together such days, as even, the happiest might look upon with envy.”—

Ida felt in her bosom a painful conflict

flict between love and duty. She had renounced wealth and splendour for herself without a pang; but ought she to renounce them for Henry? Ought she to suffer him to quit for her a station, on which he was calculated to confer such lustre? Such were her doubts; yet undoubtedly love would at length have triumphed, had not a report reached her, that Elizabeth's situation was become more difficult than ever. Her vassals had given up in despair all hopes of persuading the Sisters to contest the Count of Torrenburg's will. They found, that Elizabeth was destined to remain their sovereign: yet they protested (with such violence as gave reason to apprehend the most dangerous consequences from a refusal) that
on

on one condition only would they return peaceably to their obedience. That condition was, that if Elizabeth was to be still their liege-lady, Henry of Montfort should become their leige-lord : and they swore, that she never should enter the Castle of Torrenburg except as Henry's wife, unless she chose to see her way strewn with bleeding corpses.

Letters from Richard of Ulmenhorst confirmed this report ; and the generous Ida's resolution was taken without a moment's delay.

—" Go, my beloved !" she exclaimed and embraced him for the last time. " You were not born to waste your days in the obscurity of these shades. Power and splendour form the proper sphere for you to move in, and those it
is

is not in the poor Ida's power to bestow !
 Go then, Henry ; protect Elizabeth ;
 content her people ; make your wife,
 make your vassals, make *yourself* happy ;
 your praises will reach me even in this
 secluded valley Then *I* shall
 be happy too !"—

Henry obeyed her : to refuse was in
 truth impossible ! With every hour
 and from every quarter fresh entreaties
 arrived, all assuring him, that if he
 meant to rescue the Countess of Tor-
 renburg from the fury of her rebellious
 subjects, not a moment must be lost.—
 He determined to sacrifice every other
 consideration, to that of Elizabeth's
 welfare : he is arrived at Zurich : he
 has renounced his claims to Ida's affec-
 tions ; Ida has renounced her rights to
 her

her uncle's inheritance ; and to-morrow will see Henry of Montfort kneeling at the feet of Elizabeth, and will hear him offer her his hand for the second time.

ELIZABETH OF TORRENBURG.

PART THE EIGHTH.

Elizabeth, Countess of Torrenburg, to Conrad, Abbot of Cloister-Curwald.

CONRAD ! Conrad ! how was it possible for me to mistake for a moment the characters of *your* pen, for those of any other ? Of that pen, which like its master's persuasive tongue, knows how
to

to blend truth, raillery, and praise together so artfully, that the heart feels itself irresistibly subdued, irresistibly compelled to follow, whither-soever it is your pleasure to conduct it!

I was aware of your power: it was therefore that I fled from your presence, that I shunned your conversation, that I declined your correspondence. I knew well, that your eloquence could give a fair appearance even to the worst cause; and at that time Ida's cause was believed by me to be one of the worst, otherwise I would not have fled from its discussion.

But now how are my sentiments changed! Helen, sainted Helen! now then the time is arrived for my imitating thy glorious example: Ida is a second
Amal-

Amalberga : Elizabeth shall be a second Helen !

No : Helen's curse shall not fall upon *my* head : I will not hate those, whom *she* has blest ; I will not rob her beloved ones of their inheritance. Look down on me, fair saint ! Behold ; I sacrifice to Ida that, which is most precious to me, the affection of my heart, the happiness of my life, the hand of Henry : and can you doubt, whether I will restore to her that which I prize so little, a few handfuls of sordid earth ?

Conrad, my whole soul is in a storm ! I scarcely know, what I say what I write what I think in the present moment, I can only feel !— Yet ere I close my letter, learn thus much. Constantia is with me ; yesterday

day I clasped her to my heart. Alas! for the gentle, innocent, suffering girl! Never did my bosom harbour against *her* one spark of ill-will: her intercourse would have been like balsam to the wounds of my heart, even while I hated Ida as the inflictor of those wounds. It was cruel in you, my good Abbot, to let me inhabit the same dwelling with her for so long, and yet keep me in ignorance, that such a blessing was so near me.

In truth, you have not dealt well with me throughout; neither yourself, Conrad, nor your confidante the Abbess of Zurich. The most secret recesses of my soul were known to you, while I believed them to be closed against all the world; you knew much, of which I
would

would have purchased the knowledge with my whole wealth, and which you concealed from me far too long. I thought, that I acted without being observed: and you were busied in watching and numbering every step which I took. I cannot feel quite satisfied with your proceedings towards me; my heart involuntarily breaks out into reproaches and complaints. Yet neither complaints nor reproaches can now avail. The dye is cast; I cannot avoid following the path, which is pointed out by duty—*cannot*, did I say?—No; let me not wrong my feelings: I *would* not, if I *could* !

Oh! that I could paint to you in colours sufficiently vivid the scenes, which followed my perusal of your manuscript!—

nuscript!—the Abbess is ill I fear ill unto death!—I flew to her sick bed, and with the enthusiasm of my sensations forced her back from contemplating the fields of blessedness, to which she is already so near, that she needs but to close her eyes in order to behold the reflection of their glories! She smiled at what I said to her, and which must have appeared to her so trifling, so unworthy of a thought, when compared with those images by which her mind had just been occupied.—Her words inscribed themselves upon my heart in characters of flame: you will soon be informed of their effects.

Constantia was summoned—the Abbess joined our hands; we sank upon each other's bosom. No explanation
was

was necessary ; no one spoke a word ; we understood *her* we understood ourselves.

—“ Now then,” said the invalid in a soft faltering voice, which seemed a middle tone between a mortal’s and a spirit’s : “ now then nothing is wanting but the presence of Ida ! ” —

—“ Of Ida,” I repeated, “ and of her Henry ! ” —

And Henry came ; came the next morning, as you had assured me that he would, and for that purpose which you mentioned he has vindicated my cause like an hero, and has fully established my authority and my rights : he has knelt at my feet ; he has offered me his hand. He has named love as the reward of his services, and has obtained the boon : how could

I refuse

I refuse the reward of love to the most pure, the most tender, the most unfortunate of lovers?

*Constantia, Countess of Werdenburg, to
Abbot Conrad.*

ELIZABETH'S letter must already have apprized you, my kind protector, of the favourable change, which has taken place in the situation of your wards. Count Henry has been here, and is again departed. He came by Ida's command to offer his hand to Elizabeth : he is returned at Elizabeth's desire to salute her rival as joint-heiress with myself of the rich domains of Torrenburg.

—" I do no more than my duty," said Elizabeth, when Henry endeavoured

to express his gratitude. “Your heart belongs to Ida, and never *ought* to be another’s, therefore never *can* be mine. As to Count Frederick’s inheritance, demand of this venerable man, whose claim to it is the most just; that of Elizabeth, or of the Damsels of Werdenberg.”—

As she spoke, the door opened, and a silver-haired stranger entered the apartment. It was the Sage of Zurich, the well-known Albert Reding, to whom Elizabeth had referred her disputed claims, previous to your unveiling the truth of our history, and removing her prejudices against us. Yes, Conrad, yes! even had she still continued to abhor us, so sure as I have life, Elizabeth would still have acted by us with justice!

The

The venerable Albert confirmed Elizabeth's declaration ; he even consented to accompany the enraptured Montfort to Ida's valley, and make known to her this sudden change in her situation. They would fain have persuaded me to join their party : but I could not endure the thoughts of quitting my generous friend, at a moment, when she so greatly needs support after this difficult ^{and} victory, and under the deep affliction which she feels at the approaching dissolution of our worthy Abbess.—Farewell, dear father, and believe, that the memory of your kindness shall live in my heart for ever !

Abbot Conrad to Sigisbert, Bishop of Coira.

COUNT HENRY of Montfort and his bride are established in the Castle of Torrenburg. Their arrival threw the populace into an ecstasy of joy, and all inclination to uproar and revolt seems to be completely annihilated. Neither is Elizabeth any longer an object of aversion to her former subjects; you are already informed of the laudable manner, in which she past the month immediately succeeding the death of the Abbess of Zurich, and which she entirely dedicated to providing for the future benefit of those, over whom she was so soon to renounce all jurisdiction, and

and who (while under her command) had been so little sensible of the value of such a mistress.

—“ The few minutes,” said she, when she addrest them for the last time ; “ the few minutes, during which I can still consider you as my subjects, shall be employed in convincing you, that you mistook my character ; and that your welfare neither is now, nor ever was, indifferent to the heart of Elizabeth. I am preparing to resign my authority into the hands of the Damsels of Werdenberg ; but that authority shall be the only one worth having, authority over a *free people*.”—

What she promised, she has performed most amply. Everything in these regions breathes freedom and happiness ; she has established the privi-

leges of this people on grounds so firm, that even were the antient Tyrants of Carlsheim and Sargans to resume their abused authority, they would be compelled to leave their subjects in possession of their unviolated freedom.

Henry and Ida would fain have expressed to her their gratitude in person; but she has declined receiving them for the present, under colour of too great affliction for the late loss of her friend, the Abbess. How say you, my Lord Bishop?—I fear, the heart of our Elizabeth is by no means healed, since she cannot prevail on herself to endure the sight of her rival's happiness, even although that happiness is a work of her own creation.

Well! well!—time I hope, will do much; and (unless I flatter myself with
believing

believing too ardently what I wish) the attentions of Richard of Ulmenhorst will do more. This excellent young man is full of hope, that he may yet be able to establish his former claims on the heart of Elizabeth ; Ida and Henry encourage him in his sanguine expectations ; and no efforts of mine, that can advance his wishes, shall be wanting, you may be sure. However, nothing can be attempted, till St. Helena's Festival arrives ; on that day Elizabeth has promised to receive all her friends (Henry and Ida not excepted) and every one looks forward with the utmost impatience to this appointed day.

Of course Constantia did not fail to be present at the wedding of her beloved sister. Methinks, her passion for the Cloister is sensibly diminished since her

re-establishment in her legitimate claims.

With my whole heart shall I say—

“Amen!”—to her resolution to lay

aside the veil: she is so well calculated

to form the blessing of an earthly

bridegroom, that it would be a sin to

bury her within the walls of a Convent.

She already numbers many powerful

noblemen in the list of her admirers;

but no one hangs upon her smiles with

more perfect adoration, than Count

Oswald, Elizabeth's brother. He has

confided his passion to me, and I am

best able to judge the nature of his

sentiments. No contracted views of

interest (as many unjustly suppose, and

as perhaps Constantia herself suspects)

induce him to kneel at the feet of the

rich Heiress of Sargans: no one can

imagine such a motive, who is ac-

quainted

quainted with the real character of the proud but noble Oswald, the lustre of which is bright and glorious as the light of the sun ; though like that luminary it is now and then obscured by a few dark spots, moveable and insignificant. No ; he seeks the hand of Constantia from no other cause than the consciousness of her perfections ; except that he repents of his former injustice towards the Sisters, and is anxious to express his present respect in the most marked and striking manner.

I know not, what hopes he is authorized to nourish. The quiet retired Constantia gives encouragement to none of her admirers, and observes an obstinate silence respecting her intentions even to me : however, Count Oswald

possesses a powerful interest in her opinion from his being the brother of Elizabeth.—I expect that the festival of St. Helena will decide much.

Conclusion—written by Abbot Conrad.

THAT the readers of the fore-going manuscripts may not be left with their curiosity entirely ungratified, I will endeavour to fill up the chasm, which otherwise would appear in the Memoirs of Elizabeth. Let me obtain their pardon, if I relate as briefly as possible the circumstances of a scene, which produced upon my heart an impression very painful at the time, and never to be obliterated.

St. Helena's festival arrived. All those, whom Elizabeth had invited, failed not to attend at the appointed place and hour; among them were the Heiresses of Torrenburg, Count Henry

of Montfort, Count Oswald of March (Elizabeth's brother) Richard of Ulmenhorst, the Bishop of Coira, and myself.

It is the pious and laudable custom of our days (a custom, which I hope will be preserved even to the latest posterity) that all our most distinguished festivities should commence by offering an homage of adoration to the Supreme : it was therefore natural, that immediately on our arrival we should be conducted to the church belonging to the Convent of Zurich. Yet we could not help feeling some surprize, that Elizabeth as our hostess did not welcome us at the church-door, and place herself at the head of our procession, while it moved through the cloisters towards the chapel ; that being

the established custom on such occasions. However, we had scarcely time to make any reflections, before we found ourselves within the chapel.

It was most gorgeously adorned, as if set out for some great solemnity. The walls were decorated with wreaths of flowers; the reliques were exposed, the pictures were uncovered: the whole wealth of the Convent was displayed, and blazed on every side; innumerable tapers in chandeliers of gold, intermingled with silver lamps, dispelled the gloom of the long aisles; and clouds of incense rolled along the fretted roof, which echoed back the melodious sounds of lutes and voices, as they swelled in full chorus from the adjoining choir. At that moment our knowledge of church-customs naturally
made

made the Bishop and myself conceive a suspicion of the purpose, for which we had been conducted thither : perhaps too, the same thought suggested itself to Constantia, for on a sudden her tears began to flow. The situation of Richard of Ulmenhorst was most distressing : he ceased not to enquire, why Elizabeth did not appear ; and it was with difficulty, that Montfort, Ida, and Count Oswald (who preserved their presence of mind better than the rest) could persuade him to observe that silence, which was necessary in so holy a place.

Unhappy Richard ! for many weeks past had his friends conspired to buoy him up with hopes, which this single moment was destined to destroy for ever : for now the curtain, which concealed

cealed from us the chapel's sanctuary, was withdrawn, and all our worst fears were confirmed. Elizabeth, adorned with all the pomp and splendour of wealth, and still more with all the charms, which nature had bestowed upon her superior to her whole sex, knelt before the altar, and offered up at the footstool of the Almighty's throne the greatest sacrifice, which a mortal can ever make; the sacrifice of youth, love, beauty, liberty, and life!

• What impression this unexpected, this unwished-for scene made upon the assembly at large, it is neither in *my* power to describe, nor (I believe) in the power of any one of those, who were personally interested about Elizabeth. Each individual felt so much upon his own account, that he was

rendered incapable of attending to the sensations produced upon others. It was not till the awful ceremony of pronouncing the great and total renunciation was on the point of taking place, that I turned my eyes upon the countenance of the unhappy Richard: it was pale as that of a corse; and yet with every moment it seemed to grow still paler, till his eyes closed, and he sank into my arms without sentiment.

—“ My soul,” said Elizabeth in a firm voice, “ I bequeath to him, who gave it! my body I bequeath to the grave; my wealth to the church; the domains of Torrenburg to its legitimate possessors; the recollection of Henry of Montfort to his beloved Ida; Richard of Ulmenhorst. . . . Richard, my friend of youth, and the truest of all lovers
 Richard,

. . . Richard, whom I ought never to
 have quitted for the sake of any
 Montfort. . . . Ah ! to what consoling
 Angel shall I consign the noble Richard,
 that she may heal the wounds inflicted
 by my caprice on his honest suffering
 heart ?—Constantia ! friend of my
 bosom, be thou that Angel ! thou art
 far more worthy of his love than the
 inconstant Elizabeth, who in resigning
him, resigns every prospect of earthly
 happiness ; who in sacrificing *him*, offers
 up to Heaven the greatest sacrifice, of
 which her nature is capable.—Be he
 thine, dear injured Constantia ; accept
 from me his hand, his heart ! my in-
 justice to Ida I have repaired by the
 resignation of Henry ; but I still
 owed thee a mighty sacrifice, to efface
 the memory of many a bitter hour
 occasioned

occasioned by my obstinacy, my persecution, my self-will.—Now then I have done with the world for ever!—Beloved-ones! I bless you!—Pray for me, and farewell!”—

The Bishop (though greatly affected by this whole unexpected scene) thought it right to wait till the conclusion of the ceremony: But anxiety for Richard, whose indisposition had occasioned the bye-standers to remove him into the open air, furnished me with an excuse for leaving the chapel, which I seized with eagerness. To say the truth, I was far from satisfied with Elizabeth's determination. I shall no doubt be severely censured by my more devout successors; yet I needs must confess, that in spite of my own vows (which I pronounced with the most heart-felt joy,

joy, and never have felt the slightest wish to retract) yet still I say, in spite of my own vows, I never have seen without a pang society deprived of a valuable member, and those talents buried within the solitude of the Cloister, which might have made its owner a blessing to the world at large.

When the first shock was past, Richard recovered his resolution, and endeavoured to conceal the agony of his feelings under the veil of seriousness and silence. A splendid entertainment was spread before us, at which none of the holy Sisters appeared; consequently, we were at liberty to communicate our sentiments on what had just past without restraint. 'Twas the most melancholy feast, at which I ever assisted; a feast, which I shall never forget, as long

as I possess existence ; it seemed to me Elizabeth's funeral-feast ! we soon rose from the table, on which the viands remained untouched, and we prepared for our departure ; for we thought it vain to expect admission to the newly-professed Nun, and indeed in our present temper of mind that admission was scarcely to be wished—the Bishop, however, delivered it as his opinion, that propriety required us at least to give Elizabeth the option of seeing us. Accordingly, a message informed her of our approaching departure ; her answer was, that she must decline all visits, except those of Constantia and of Richard of Ulmenhorst.

They obeyed her orders. Elizabeth received them with joy and tenderness.

She

She doubted not the success of her proposal, and addrest Constantia as the heiress of Richard's heart : but she was speedily undeceived. Richard declared, in terms so express as left no doubt of his decision, that since Elizabeth was lost to the world, no refuge was left for him but the Cloister ; while on the other hand, Constantia confest, that her heart was no longer in her own power. After a long and unavailing discussion, Elizabeth dismiss them, whether satisfied or displeased by the firmness of her two dearest friends, it may be difficult to say : but unless I am totally ignorant of the female mind, she could not help being flattered by Richard's refusal to admit any rival to her in his heart, but God ; and
probably

probably she was secretly not much incensed against Constantia for having bestowed her affections else-where.

Count Oswald, who had been by no means pleased by his sister's endeavours to unite Richard and Constantia, now felt his hopes revive : he flattered himself, that *he* was the unknown object of Constantia's choice ; but in this belief he was mistaken. There was a young knight, who had offered her his heart and hand at a time, when she had nothing but a heart and hand to offer in return. Conradin, an ill-portioned brother of the Landgrave of Thuringia, would have loved her, had she been no other than Mary Tell ; Conradin had been faithful to Constantia of Werdenberg under all the scorn and obloquy, under which she at one time laboured ;

and

and Conradin was now the man, for whom the wealthy Heiress of Sargans rejected every other. *He* deserved the inestimable treasure of a wife like Constantia; and *she* was well worthy to be the mistress of a heart, whose tenderness and generosity could only be excelled by her own.

It was long, before Elizabeth acquired sufficient firmness to receive the personal thanks of Ida and Henry for that felicity, of which she was herself the authoress; but on the day when she was consecrated as Domina of Zurich, this long-delayed interview took place. The impression, which it made upon her mind, will be best explained by the following letter.

Elizabeth to Constantia.

At length then this dreaded interview is over : I have seen Ida and her happy husband.—Wrong me not, Constantia, by suspecting, that resentment or pique has made me delay this meeting for so long ; oh ! no ! it was the consciousness of my own weak heart !—Even Helen of Homburg could not at once resolve to witness the happiness of Eginhart and Amalberga ; and alas ! I am no faultless Saint like Helen !—the Cloister is the palace of enthusiasm, is the native land of visions ; its inhabitants are only happy in proportion, as those visions are sweet and soothing.

I had formed for myself a little circle of ideal companions, whom at my pleasure I could summon to dispel my solitude. My venerable friend, by the side of whose death-bed I formed the resolution of dedicating my life to the service of Heaven, was among the dearest of those apparitions. The hand of mortality had torn her from me; Enthusiasm restored her to my arms. I saw her, as if she had been still alive. . . . I spoke to her, and laid open the most secret folds of my heart. . . . I almost fancied, that at times I heard her reply in words of comfort. . . . Alas! the fatal sight of Ida and her Henry has dispelled all these visions, which were to me the source of so much happiness! it seemed like a flash of lightning, which penetrates through our

closed eye-lids, and wakes us suddenly from some delightful dream.—Now nothing flits before me in my solitude, but those scenes of my melancholy life, in which Ida and Montfort bore so great a share.—Leave me, oh! leave me, ye cruel thoughts, which force me back to a world of sorrow; and thou, mild-spirit of my sainted friend, return, and by thy presence aid me to prepare for that state of bliss, which *you* already enjoy, and to which I feel that I am hastening!

By the will of Heaven be done; but the moment of dissolution will be sweet and welcome!

THE END.

ERRATA.

VOL. I.

Page 6, line 2—for “ to which,” read “ for which.”

— 172, line 19—for “ mputations,” read “ imputations.”

— 272, line 17—for “ were,” read “ was.”

— 273, line 3—for “ confidant,” read “ confident.”

VOL. II.

Page 29, line 11—for “ compelled to,” read “ compelled me to.”

— 153, line 11—for “ which,” read “ as.”

— 158, line 11—omit “ or.”

— 219, line 4—for “ that your sex are the most fortunate,” read “ that you are the most fortunate of your sex.”

— 249, line 18—for “ derison,” read “ derision.”

— 281, line 3—for “ woful,” read “ awful.”

— 337, line 11—for “ hasten a person,” read “ hasten in person.”

ERRATA

VOL. III.

- Page 29, line 12—*for* “rung,” *read* “wrung.”
— 108, line 14—*for* “has,” *read* “had.”
— 295, line last—*for* “probibity,” *read* “pro-
bity.”
— 308, line 12—*for* “uperiority,” *read* “su-
periority.”
— 349, line 6—*for* “Zender,” *read* “Bender.”
-

VOL. IV.

- Page 31, line 1—*for* “the would,” *read* “she
would.”
— 52, line 2—*efface the Comma after* “Rosan-
na.”
— 140, line 12—*instead of a semicolon put a*
comma.
— 159, line 2—*for* “except,” *read* “than.”
— 283, line 17—*for* “confe,” *read* “confer.”
— 309, line 12—*for* “dye,” *read* “die.”
— 311, line 14—*after* “mentioned,” *put a full*
stop.
-

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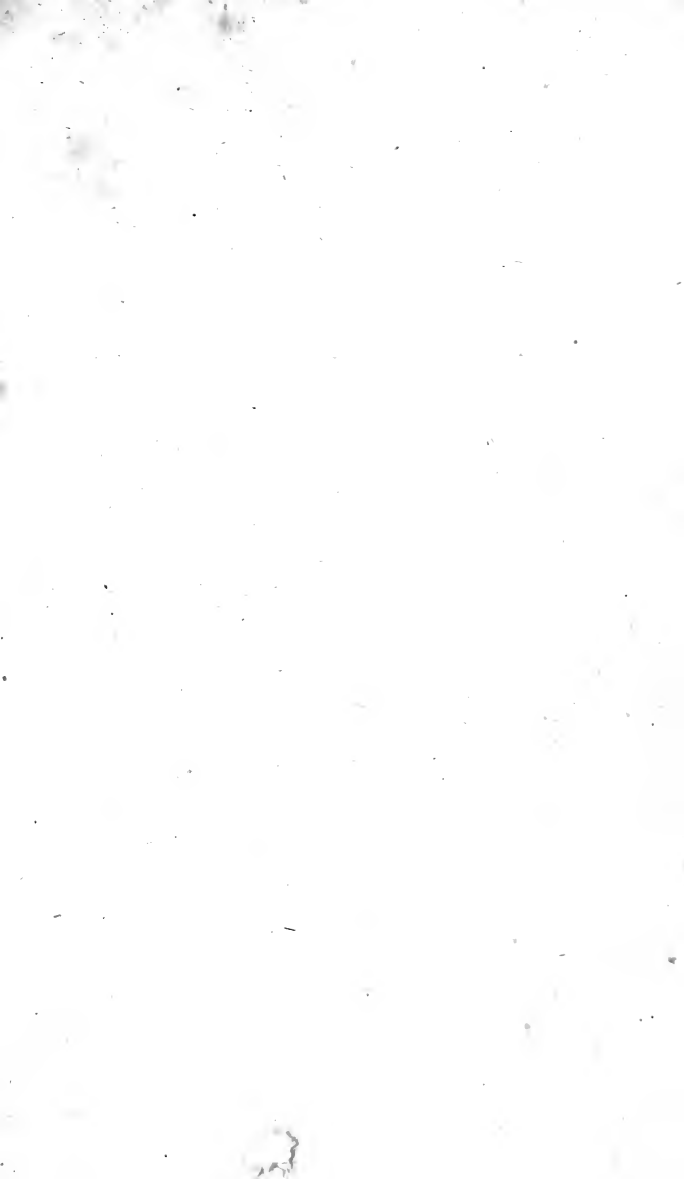
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